

BENJAMIN WARFIELD:  
HIS CHRISTOLOGY AND SOTERIOLOGY

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by  
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To my  
Father and Mother



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#### SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

Much of Warfield's work of a polemic nature and widely scattered. Attempt to be Biblical his greatest characteristic. He sees rejection of verbal inspiration as the root of the modernizing trend. Warfield mistaken in functional importance he attached to verbal inspiration. Warfield has much in common with the Theology of the Word. His criticism of Ritschlianism similar to that made by Karl Barth. Warfield performed a much-needed service for his day. His Biblical and theological studies being found of considerable value today. Circles in which his influence is still strongly felt in the United States. Epilogue. . . . . 264

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## PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to present a critical examination of the thought of Professor Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield in reference to the doctrines of Christology and soteriology. We have been encouraged by Dr. Lefferts A. Loetscher, Professor of Church History at Princeton Theological Seminary, to think that in choosing this particular aspect of Warfield's thought for investigation we have definitely touched on the heart and soul of his theological labours.<sup>1</sup> Throughout his life Warfield had a world-wide following which attended diligently each new product from his pen; nevertheless the theological outlook generally prevailing in this period (1878-1921) was not one inclined to be friendly to the position he maintained. Times have changed considerably in the past thirty years, however. The theological liberalism almost completely dominant in the northern part of the United States at the time of the World War is today being largely displaced by the neo-Orthodox "Theology of the Word". This movement, greatly aided and abetted by current ecumenical discussions, has resulted in a reawakened interest in the old Princeton School of Theology.<sup>2</sup>

Several unpublished theses have dealt with this school of theology<sup>3</sup> and one

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(1) In a private interview at Princeton, New Jersey, December, 1953.

(2) I.e., that generally associated with the names of Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, B.B. Warfield, and Geerhardus Vos (though in our opinion the last two deserve to be placed in a somewhat different category from the first three).

(3) Walter R. Clyde, "The Development of Presbyterian Theology from 1705 to 1823," Hartford Theological Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut; John O. Nelson, "The Rise of the Princeton Theology," Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut (this thesis covers the period of the Hodges but does not consider Warfield); Charles Wm. McNutt, "The Fundamentalism of J. Gresham Machen," Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia (Machen was associated with Princeton only in his earlier period); and Penrose St. Amant, "The Rise and Development of the Princeton School of Theology," Faculty of Divinity, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh.



has considered Warfield to a limited extent.<sup>1</sup> The author of this work, Dr. William D. Livingstone, had before him the purpose of examining a definite type of thinking in relation to <sup>a</sup><sub>A</sub> certain period of American theology. It was not his intention to investigate Warfield with a view of discovering any individual characteristics of thought. This is apparent in the fact that he often permits a citation from Charles Hodge's Systematic Theology to suffice as illustration of Warfield's view.

Even during the course of the research for this present work, Samuel G. Craig wrote the following:

"It is to be hoped that the day is not far distant when some scholar with the requisite knowledge and ability will give the theological world something like a full length portrait of Warfield as a man and theologian."<sup>2</sup>

While the scope of our thesis does not exactly coincide with what Mr. Craig had in mind, and we certainly would not pretend to be the scholar he describes, his remark does indicate that in some quarters the desire is felt for a re-examination of Warfield's theology. Professor T.F. Torrance, who has encouraged us to pursue this research, reviews the republished volume of Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, and comments in a vein not entirely dissimilar to that of Mr. Craig.

"It is useful and indeed helpful to have thrust into this discussion once more, by republication, the best work on this subject by one who has been acknowledged a giant in the history of Reformed theology, the late Professor B.B. Warfield."<sup>3</sup>

We have endeavoured to allow Professor Warfield to speak for himself to as great a degree as seemed practicable, and to let the material itself

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(1) William D. Livingstone, "The Princeton Apologetic as Exemplified by the Works of B.B. Warfield and J.G. Machen: A Study of American Theology 1880-1930," Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

(2) Biblical and Theological Studies (by Warfield), edited by Samuel G. Craig, p.vi.

(3) "Scottish Journal of Theology," vol.7, no.1, p.104.

determine the general outline of the dissertation. Needless to say, we have tried to be absolutely objective in the investigation of just what Warfield's teaching was: still we have our own position from which criticism is occasionally offered. Perhaps the only scientific thing to do is to admit at the outset the possession of a Calvinistic outlook, though not a Calvinism which looks upon the Systematic Theology of either C. Hodge or L. Berkhof as the last word.

The primary sources for this study have been the collected writings (10 volumes) of Warfield published by the Oxford University Press and a number of other 8vo books of sermons and lectures. The secondary sources consist in articles published in various periodicals, and pamphlets neither of which have been given republication. A limited amount of manuscript material and uncopyrighted works comprise a tertiary group. Whenever possible, citations have been made in terms of the primary sources. In employing the tertiary sources the citations given refer to the Opuscula Warfieldii in the Library of Princeton Theological Seminary, the Roman numeral referring to the volume and the Arabic numeral or numerals referring to the page or unit and page as the case may be.

We have attempted to make the bibliography of Warfield's works an exhaustive one since in the course of our research we have seen no such list. A few explanatory remarks are in order: In the list of articles by Warfield we have, in the interest of clarity, departed from standard procedure and underlined the name of the periodical while placing within quotation marks the title of the article. The numerous critical reviews of Warfield are grouped according to the periodicals in which they occurred and placed within their groups in chronological order.

A considerable variety exists among these reviews. Some are quite lengthy and disclose to a considerable extent Warfield's own thought, while others are little more than routine notices. In order to make this list more useful we have placed one or more asterisks opposite the title to indicate those reviews in which some aspect of Warfield's thought is revealed to some, or to a considerable, or to an outstanding degree. In the case of all articles and reviews the page number cited is simply that on which the item begins. The selected bibliography lists only these works which were either referred to in the work or found to be especially helpful. Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language is taken as the criterion for the spelling and meaning of words used in this thesis.

We should like to acknowledge with gratitude our debt to the members of the faculty of New College, Edinburgh, and most especially to Professor T.F. Torrance whose patient guidance and counsel have been of inestimable value. Appreciation must also be expressed to Professors Hugh Thompson Kerr, Jr. and Lefferts A. Loetscher of Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey, and to Dr. Walter Lowrie and the late Mr Samuel T. Craig, of Princeton, New Jersey, who were most hospitable and helpful in private discussion; to Dr. J.A. Lamb, librarian of New College Library, Edinburgh, and Miss E.R. Leslie of the secretarial staff, as well as to the librarians of the Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey, and of the Smythe Library, Decatur, Georgia, for courteous and valuable assistance. Our heartfelt thanks are due in the last, but by no means least, place to the unnamed donor of the Challenge Fund, by means of which we have been able to undertake this very profitable period of study.

## CHAPTER ONE

## THE LIFE OF BENJAMIN WARFIELD

Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield was born November 5, 1851 at "Grasmere", the country estate of his father William Warfield, near Lexington, Kentucky. From his father, Benjamin seems to have inherited a quiet, reserved nature. As a boy he manifested a keen interest in the flora and fauna of the region, and during his student days made a special study of the birds of that section. His boyhood hobbies appear to have been the collecting of birds' eggs, butterflies and moths, and geological specimens. These were less the capricious activities of a farm boy than they were the early fruit of a very scientific and logical mind, for he was an enthusiastic reader of Darwin, being as he tells us, a "Darwinian of the purest water" in his student days and counting Audubon's works on American birds and mammals his chief treasure.<sup>1</sup> His early education was received in private schools in Lexington after which he was prepared for entry into Princeton University — then College of New Jersey — by private tutoring. There seems to have been a mixture in him of the scientist and the romanticist for he was a lover of poetry, Browning in particular, and in later years even published a small volume of his own verses and hymns.<sup>2</sup>

In 1861, the peaceful life of the Kentucky countryside was disrupted by the War Between the States. This disruption was felt very keenly within the Breckinridge family. There is no record of where the sentiments of Benjamin's mother, formerly Mary Cabell Breckinridge, lay; her kinsmen, for generations

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(1) Cf. Biographical sketch, "Benjamin B. Warfield", by Samuel C. Craig in Biblical and Theological Studies by B.B. Warfield, p.xii.

(2) Four Hymns and Some Religious Verses, 1910.



distinguished by intellectual strength and controversial ability were quite divided in their allegiance. Benjamin's maternal grandfather, Robert J. Breckinridge, a staunch Presbyterian preacher, theologian<sup>1</sup> and statesman, was active in Civil War politics as an uncompromising opponent to Southern sympathizers, even refusing to save members of his own family from Northern prisons and firing squads.<sup>2</sup> John Cabell Breckinridge, the uncle of Benjamin, was, on the other hand, a valiant champion of state rights. It was under the leadership of this distinguished orator, lawyer, and one-time vice-president of the United States that Kentucky declared herself neutral in the civil controversy. His career is as interesting as any novel, including distinguished service as a Confederate general and secretary of war in the Confederate cabinet.

It was the Breckinridge side of his household in which Benjamin Warfield took pride<sup>3</sup> and well he might, for no less than five of them are listed in the American Biographical Dictionary. A distinct resemblance to these outstanding members of the Breckinridge family is seen in Warfield, for fearlessly zealous in controversy, he was untiring in intellectual activity. All of the Breckinridges were public figures excelling in oratory and social influence, but there the resemblance to Warfield ceased. As a young man the tall, imposing figure bore more resemblance to the soft-spoken Southern gentleman type. He was of a retiring nature like his father and even in later years when he was to become one of the noblest-known men in the whole Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, he took virtually no part in the debates of the General Assembly, served on no Boards of the Church, and seldom preached

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(1) Author of a definitive work on theology, The Knowledge of God Objectively and Subjectively Considered, 1859.

(2) American Biographical Dictionary, vol. III, p. 11.

(3) According to Dr. Walter Lowrie, personal acquaintance of Warfield, in a private interview, December, 1952, at Princeton, New Jersey.

in neighbouring churches during his twenty-four years as professor at Princeton Theological Seminary.<sup>1</sup>

As a student his remarkable intellectual ability was recognized at Princeton University where he graduated at the age of nineteen being at the head of his class and having taken highest honours in every department. His interest at this time lay in the field of mathematics and physics and it was in preparation for a career of teaching in these subjects that he left in February 1872 for graduate study in Edinburgh and later Heidelberg. From Heidelberg in the mid-summer of that same year his parents received the news of his intention to study theology. It came as somewhat of a surprise, for in spite of the fact that Mrs. Warfield had often expressed the hope that her sons would become ministers, Benjamin had never shown any particular interest in theology or church affairs outside of being a regular member since the age of sixteen.

He thereupon returned from Europe and in the fall of 1873 entered Princeton Theological Seminary being for one year under the professorship of Charles Hodge. He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Ebenezer in 1875 and served during the summer of that year as stated supply of the Presbyterian Church of Concord, Kentucky. Upon graduation from the seminary in 1876 he served for several months as stated supply of the First Presbyterian Church of Dayton, Ohio, and in August was married to Miss Annie Pearce Kinkead, the daughter of a prominent lawyer. After declining a call to become pastor of the Dayton church, Warfield sailed again for Europe, this time accompanied by his young bride, and entered upon a year's graduate study at the University of Leipzig. During this year the field of New Testament study became his main interest, a fact which accounted for his declination of an offer received in that

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(1) Cf. "Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, A Memorial Address", by Francis L. Patton, "The Princeton Theological Review", vol. XIX, p.370.

same year to become professor of Old Testament literature at Western Theological Seminary of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> Upon returning to America late in 1877, he became the assistant pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland, which position he resigned after a short period to become instructor in New Testament Language and Literature at Western Theological Seminary. It was only in the following year upon appointment as a full professor, that he was finally ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America.

Warfield laboured at Western for nine years and at the end of this period he published his first major work, Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament (1886). The work was well received on both sides of the Atlantic by such men as Joseph Henry Thayer<sup>2</sup> and William Robertson Nicoll<sup>3</sup> both of whom in their reviews of it not only expressed high praise for its author but also considerable regret that he was not continuing in the field of New Testament criticism and exegesis, for by this time the news was abroad that Warfield had been offered, and had accepted the chair of Systematic Theology at Princeton. From all accounts it was a difficult decision for him to make. The field of New Testament literature was his first choice among the various divisions of the theological disciplines; it was the field in which he had made preparation to teach; and it was the field in which he had already gained a certain amount of recognition. Already during this period at Western he had declined the offer of the chair of Systematic Theology, in the Theological Seminary of the Northwest at Chicago - now McCormick Theological Seminary. The fact that Charles Hodge had been a professor of New

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(1) Craig, op.cit., p.xiii.

(2) "The Andover Review", vol.VIII, no.xlii, pp.100-101.

(3) Craig, op.cit., p.xiv. NB. The Rev. John Gilmour of Edinburgh recalls, in a private interview in March, 1954, that this early work of Warfield was used as a textbook at the Assembly's College, Belfast, as well as New College, Edinburgh.



Testament exegesis before he assumed the task of teaching systematic theology was urged by his friends as a valid reason, and this, strengthened doubtless by the ties he already had with Princeton, determined his decision. So in 1887 Warfield stepped into the vacancy created by the death of A.A. Hodge and remained there teaching actively even up to the day he died, February 17, 1921.

Throughout most of this time Warfield's wife was an invalid and his devoted attention to her, in addition to the fact of his natural reticence, served to make him somewhat of a recluse on the campus of Princeton Seminary. "No one really knew him," said Dr. Walter Lowrie, "except perhaps Casper Wistar Hodge and even he was odd himself ... old at twenty."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Francis L. Patton in his memorial address at the time of Warfield's death remarked, "No man of my acquaintance ever held his own opinion with more tenacity than he of whom I am speaking. No man sought counsel less in forming that opinion. There was an aloofness and a detachment about him that might easily have been mistaken for a haughty disregard of what other people think. He was habitually objective in his thinking and neither made revelations of his own subjectivities nor cared much apparently for the subjectivities of other people. Few and short were his words of praise for other men, and he was silent regarding himself."<sup>2</sup>

From all accounts, Warfield was not merely a scholar, but a teacher in the

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(1) Dr. and Mrs. Lowrie were well acquainted with Mrs. Warfield, having known her before she married Benjamin. Dr. Lowrie and Dr. Warfield were far from being in agreement on all theological matters, "But in his will Benjamin spoke very affectionately of me," remarked Dr. Lowrie. "I was somewhat surprised."

(2) "The Princeton Theological Review", vol. XIX, p. 374. Just how difficult it must have been to really know Warfield's personality we discovered recently at Princeton, New Jersey, in interviewing Mr. Samuel G. Craig and Dr. Walter Lowrie, both of whom were associated with Dr. Warfield for a number of years. From the former we received the impression of Warfield as a kind, sincere Christian man with deep religious conviction and humility, while Dr. Lowrie pictured Warfield as an arrogant, self-centred dogmatist. (It must be remembered that Craig hardly agreed with Warfield's theological position, while Lowrie just as hardly disagreed with much of it.)

truest sense. A former student recalls the professor's keen awareness of the need among the preachers of the day for greater conviction in Biblical preaching. He was not content simply to deliver his material in the form of lectures, but was concerned to have his students "think things out for themselves." Usually about fifteen minutes of each lecture period was given for students' questions. Both Patton and Gilmour describe these discussion periods as being of the nature of a Socratic dialogue. The latter recalls an occasion when some visiting students pressed Warfield from a more or less Ritschlian position in which they had been instructed. As the discussion advanced, however, it was the professor who began asking questions, searching questions which the students acknowledged to be just, but which had never occurred to their minds before. According to Gilmour, Warfield was not content merely to win an argument but wished rather for the student to arrive at the truth "on his own". He would listen sympathetically to a student's question or objection and most generally would respond by asking the student some questions and so attempt to lead him to re-examine his own position.<sup>1</sup>

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From all who knew his writings we receive an united verdict on the excellence of his scholarship. Otto Piper has written,

"Aided by an indefatigable study of the New Testament Criticism and interpretation, patristics, church history and Reformed theology and familiar with all that had been written in foreign languages, he expounded in innumerable articles the truths of the Bible and based on the Bible, those of the Westminster Confession."<sup>2</sup>

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(1) The Rev. John Gilmour of Edinburgh who did one year's graduate study at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1901 after having completed the regular course of training at the Assembly's College, Belfast. The information used in this paper was given in a private interview, March, 1954.

(2) Encyclopedia of Religions, p.819 quoted by Craig op.cit., p.xviii.

J. Ross Stevenson, President of Princeton Theological Seminary at the time of Warfield's death, remarked on the scope of his learning.

"By profound study in many languages, he mastered, as few men have been able to do, the whole field of theological learning. His knowledge was encyclopedic, and the ready information he could give on any subject, or regarding any book, was amazing."<sup>1</sup>

When it is remembered that before he had reached the age of thirty-six Warfield had received calls from Western, McCormick and Princeton seminaries to occupy various chairs of Old Testament, New Testament, and Systematics, it can be seen that Dr. Stevenson was probably not exaggerating at all. Casper Wistar Hodge who was the immediate successor of Warfield at Princeton, spoke in his inaugural address of the men who had occupied the chair of Systematic Theology before him, Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge and Archibald Alexander Hodge. Warfield, he said, excelled them all in erudition.<sup>2</sup> John De Witt, professor of Church History at Princeton Seminary, once said in a private conversation that he had known three of the greatest Reformed theologians of America in the latter half of the nineteenth century - Charles Hodge, W.C.T. Shedd and Henry P. Smith - and "that he was not only certain that Warfield knew a great deal more than any one of them, but that he was disposed to think that he knew more than all three of them put together."<sup>3</sup>

His passing was keenly felt in conservative Presbyterian circles all over the world and especially at Princeton. John R. Mackay, in 1922, spoke of the generation as having lost its "most able and learned defender of orthodox Calvinism,"<sup>4</sup> while J. Ross Stevenson shows an even higher esteem in remarking that "the Reformed Theology and the cause of evangelical religion have lost one of the ablest interpreters and defenders which America has ever produced."<sup>5</sup>

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(1) "Expository Times", vol. XXXIII, p.152.

(2) Craig, op.cit., p.xvii.

(3) Ibid., p.xvii.

(4) "The Expositor", vol. XXIV, p.33.

(5) Op.cit., p.153.



Similar expressions could be quoted from many able men who were acquainted with his works.<sup>1</sup>

During his years of teaching at Princeton, Warfield's voice was heard mainly in the periodicals, The Presbyterian and Reformed Review, of which he was editor, and its successor The Princeton Theological Review. Though he published some twenty volumes during this period including books of sermons, there was not a one of them which, by its nature, could serve as a definitive exposition of his thought. Probably for this reason, as well as the fact of the polemic nature of most of the articles themselves, the name of Warfield is not more widely known today than it is.

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It will probably not be amiss to point out some characteristics of the thought and general position of Dr. Warfield which would not properly be included in the following chapter on his epistemology. In the history of doctrine he saw a pattern in which the Church was becoming more definitive in the confession of faith as the years went on,<sup>2</sup> not meaning thereby, however, that any new item of faith was added as in the Roman Church. First there was the insistence on the unique Christian doctrine of God and then followed the centuries of Christological controversy in which the concern was of the doctrine of Christ, the God-man. From Augustine to Anselm the Church was concerned in

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(1) Auguste Le Cerf, An Introduction to Reformed Dogmatics, refers to Warfield as "one of the highest authorities in all that concerns calvinistic thought." p.390. E. Digges La Touche, The Person of Christ in Modern Thought, lists Warfield as the outstanding American representative of orthodox Christology at the beginning of the twentieth century. p.11. Hugh Thompson Kerr, Jr., in the preface to A Compend of Calvin's Institutes refers to Warfield as "America's most fervent exponent of Calvinism". Edward A. Dowey, The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology, speaks of Warfield's work on the aspect of Calvin's thought as being of "basic importance", (preface).

(2) The Significance of the Westminster Standards, pp.1-14. Cf. Introduction by Warfield to Abraham Kuyper's The Work of the Holy Spirit, pp.xxv-xxvii.

making explicit her doctrine of sin and man's consequent need. It then became Luther's task to emphasize God's objective provision for man's need in his treatment of justification by faith, with Calvin supplying, close on the heels of this, an emphasis on God's subjective provision for man's need, or in other words, the work of the Holy Spirit in uniting us to Christ thus applying redemption to our hearts. Further work on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was accomplished by the Puritan theologians until in the Westminster Confession of Faith we have the richest, most precise statement of the essence of vital religion.<sup>1</sup>

From this it can be readily surmised that Warfield did not picture the theological task of each new generation as one of tearing down all that had been done in the past in order to build its own theology, but rather a re-examination of the old in the light of the Bible, possibly shedding some erroneous beliefs, but in the main, building upon the foundation of the past. He had the greatest respect for the catholic doctrines of the Church and thought of her creeds not as the result of restless speculation and philosophical pretention but precisely the opposite, as the Church's rebuttal of such. The philosophical interest has been more the characteristic of the heretics throughout the ages while the Church might almost be said to have possessed a certain speculative inertness.

"The accents which smite our ears, out of our creeds, with such tremendous emphasis do not indicate the crisp, cold, sharp movements of mere intellection; they are the pulsations of great hearts heaving in emotion and rising to the assertion of the precious truth by which they live. If we read them as merely speculative discriminations, the fault lies in us, not in them."<sup>2</sup>

"The creeds have been given to the Church not by philosophers but by shepherds of the flocks, who loved the sheep..."<sup>3</sup>

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(1) The Significance of the Westminster Standards, p.22.

(2) Ibid., pp.27-28.

(3) Ibid., p.29.



We are completely mistaken, however, if we picture Warfield as one who, in thought, has transferred the essence of his faith from the Word of God to some creed or formulation about the Word. At this juncture Warfield took his stand with Calvin who "refused to treat any human composition as an authoritative determination of doctrine, from which we may decline only upon pain of heresy: that belongs to the Word of God alone."<sup>1</sup>

In many respects Warfield resembled the great Genevan reformer for whom he had such a high regard.<sup>2</sup> As to training, each was well acquainted with the learning of his day in fields other than those directly related to theology. Of course this was a feat much more easily attained in the time of Calvin than in Warfield's, but the latter came remarkably close to it for a man of the nineteenth century, having become proficient in the fields of biology, mathematics and physics before even turning his mind toward theology. A counterpart to Calvin's legal training is seen in the influence Warfield must have felt from his many kinsmen in the legal profession. At any rate, there is on Warfield's part a strong desire to be definite in his theological and exegetical writing which more than matches that of Calvin. In the private lives of both there were personal crosses to bear, and in an exterior sense each conceived of himself as living in a world situation in which contention for the truth of the gospel was of supreme importance. Warfield asks that Calvin be excused for some of his biting satire since it was the very life of the evangelical doctrines for which he was fighting. At times his back was to the wall in an effort to combat the heresy of his day. In all fairness we might ask today that Warfield himself be excused of a rapier-like pen which at times was as biting for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as the Genevan reformer's was for the sixteenth.

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(1) Warfield, Calvin and Calvinism, p.209.

(2) Ibid., p.24.

We say the times in which each lived were not unlike for in 1880 the Calvinistic view of man was definitely on the defensive against the more optimistic view of Horace Bushnell and his school. In the doctrine of God, the sovereignty was barely mentioned in comparison with the benevolent Father notion and the very heart of Warfield's theology - God acting in history - was being whisked away by a philosophy of history which was little more than transformed biological evolution. What was undoubtedly Calvin's greatest trait was Warfield's as well; that of attempting to be thoroughly Biblical in theology. What we have in the Institutes, claimed Warfield, was not a closed philosophic system but "just a Christian man's reading of the Scriptures."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the dogmatics of Warfield himself are described by John R. Mackay as "but exegesis of the superlative kind."<sup>2</sup>

In all of this it is interesting to note that Warfield did not boast greatly of being a Calvinist, that is, of being a pure follower of the writings of John Calvin. He called himself a Calvinist, but from his pen the word "Calvinism" was a term referring to that religion in which the individual soul was directly and completely dependent on the God of grace.<sup>3</sup> For him, then, every Christian was at least an implicit Calvinist.<sup>4</sup> John Calvin was simply that one theologian, by way of eminence, who gave this religion its most explicit theological treatment. Still the question may be justly put to Warfield, Tell us what is an explicit Calvinist. The finest answer of all to this inquiry would come in words actually penned by Abraham Kuyper ~~with~~ which Warfield not only approved but claimed to be the best that Kuyper ever wrote:

"Religion on earth finds its highest expression in the act of prayer. But Calvinism in the Christian Church is simply that

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- (1) Calvin and Calvinism, p.133.
  - (2) Op.cit., p.33.
  - (3) The Plan of Salvation, p.87.
  - (4) Calvin and Calvinism, p.356.

tendency which makes a man assume the same attitude toward God in his profession and life which he exhibits in prayer. There is no Christian, be he Lutheran or Baptist, Methodist or Greek, whose prayer is not thoroughly Calvinistic; no child of God, to whatever Church organization he may belong, but in his prayer he gives glory to God above and renders thanks to his Father in heaven for all the grace working in him, and acknowledges that the eternal love of God above has, in the face of his resistance, drawn him out of darkness into light. On his knees before God everyone that has been saved will recognize the sole efficiency of the Holy Spirit in every good work performed, and will acknowledge that without the atoning grace of Him who is rich in mercies, he would not exist for a moment, but would sink away in guilt and sin. In a word, whoever truly prays ascribes nothing to his own will or power except the sin that condemns him before God, and knows of nothing that could endure the judgment of God except it be wrought in him by divine love. But whilst all other tendencies in the Church preserve this attitude as long as the prayer lasts, to lose themselves in radically different conceptions as soon as the Amen has been pronounced, the Calvinist adheres to the truth of his prayer, in his confession, in his theology, in his life, and the Amen that has closed his petition re-echoes in the depth of his consciousness and throughout the whole of his existence."<sup>1</sup>

Upon first glance at the collected writings of Professor Warfield one might be inclined to arrive at the erroneous conclusion that the Princetonian considered theology to be merely a conglomeration of topics unconnected in any essential or vital matter. Actually he viewed the whole body of Christian theology as a unit, almost a living organism. A disease infecting one aspect of the truth was for him a potential threat to every other part. Many of his offhand expressions show this clearly.

"A Unitarian theology is commonly associated with a Pelagian anthropology and a Socinian soteriology."<sup>2</sup> "From a Pelagianizing anthropology a moral influence theory is inevitable."<sup>3</sup> "Where the conception of the person of Christ is so inadequate

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(1) "Presbyterian and Reformed Review", vol. II, p. 382.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p. 168.

(3) "The Princeton Theological Review", vol. VII, p. 141.



the conception of His work is not likely to be less so."<sup>1</sup>  
 "If we have not much to be saved from, why, certainly, a very little atonement will suffice for our needs. It is, after all, only the sinner that requires a Saviour."<sup>2</sup>

No doubt Warfield has often appeared unduly polemical and pedantic, and perhaps he cannot be excused entirely. Yet when his sense of the vital interrelation of the various loci of theology is kept in mind much of his polemical work appears as a battle for the heart of Christianity, though that battle be at some outpost. He maintained that ultimately there was no middle ground possible between the complete Christianity commended to us by the Scriptural revelation, and no Christianity at all. Hence there was wisdom not merely in defending an indispensable minimum of Christian truth, but rather in defending at times, the maximum of it.<sup>3</sup> On the matter of heresy and concession he wrote,

"It is plain that he who modifies the teachings of the Word of God in the smallest particular at the dictation of any 'man-made opinion' has already deserted the Christian ground, and is already, in principle, a 'heretic.'"<sup>4</sup>

In accordance with this principle Warfield is seen to be as quick to criticize the Christological construction of H.R. Mackintosh as that of, say, W. Bousset. This is not to say that he considered a Kenotic view of Christ to be as serious a departure from orthodoxy as an Arian view, but that both were in principle, departures. The departure itself was basic; the position to which the departure was made was secondary. His polemical procedure usually took the form of an "either ... or" type of discussion. He delighted to start from his opponent's viewpoint or premise and following out the argument logically show that such a position was untenable and amounted to a rejection

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(1) Critical Review, p.329.

(2) Studies in Theology, p.257.

(3) "The Princeton Theological Review", vol.IV, p.124; Cf. Op.VI, p.21.

(4) Article entitled "Heresy and Concession," in "The Presbyterian Messenger," May 7, 1896.

of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Doubtless Warfield conceived these measures to be necessary, but from a psychological standpoint we cannot help but feel that his influence was lessened thereby. His arguments were at times more logically devastating than winsome.

Patton has commented, "I do not think that Dr. Warfield cared much how the materials that enter into a theological system are organized."<sup>2</sup> This is apparently true; indeed there is not altogether lacking evidence to suppose that Warfield considered the Princeton thought to be too thoroughly conditioned by a "system". In contributing to A.A. Hodge's book, "The Life of Charles Hodge", he offered the following criticism of Charles Hodge as an exegete.

"His discussion of disputed grammatical or lexical points had a flavour of second-handedness about them. He appeared not to care to have a personal opinion upon such matters, but was content to accept another's without having made it really his own. He would state, in such cases, several views from various critical commentators, and then make his choice between them; but I could not always feel that his choice was determined by sound linguistic principles. He sometimes seemed to be quite as apt to choose an indefensible as a plausible one - guided apparently, sometimes by weight of name, sometimes by dislike of what seemed to him over subtlety, and sometimes, it seemed, by theological predilection."<sup>3</sup>

In any event, Patton quite properly contrasts the two theologians C. Hodge and B.B. Warfield. Of the former he observed that the fact that any given doctrine "was the obvious and necessary consequence of another doctrine conceded to be true had a controlling influence over his mind ..."<sup>4</sup> while concerning Warfield he wrote, "He was a dogmatic theologian who based the content of his

(1) Cf. The chapter infra: "Jesus of History" especially Warfield's argument against Johannes Weiss.

(2) Op.cit., p.387.

(3) A.A.Hodge, The Life of Charles Hodge, p.589.

(4) Op.cit., p.369f.

teaching on the plain and obvious meaning of the inspired Word."<sup>1</sup>

Both Craig<sup>2</sup> and Patton<sup>3</sup> speculate as to why Warfield did not produce a Systematic Theology and both come more or less to the same conclusion - the time was not ripe. That Warfield should have conceived of his task as that of hewing stones for some future builder to use is not at all out of keeping with the account which Gilmour gives of his attitude. Warfield, he said, fully appreciated the value and even necessity of new thought in the field of dogmatic theology. "He always had an open mind as to what might be when he was dead and gone. He would not say with Hodge, 'We have it. There is no more light to come.'"<sup>4</sup> Patton concludes by giving to Warfield a tribute which of course only time can prove.

"I venture the prediction that some of the choicest stones of that new building (the new systematic theology) will be those which have been hewn and shaped in the Warfield quarry."<sup>5</sup>

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(1) Op.cit., p.372. NB. In our interview with Mr. Gilmour we made the following remark, "It seems to me just from reading Professor Warfield's works that he held to essentially the same theology as that taught by Charles Hodge, but as it comes from his pen it is more dynamic. It was more directly conditioned by his Biblical studies. Would you say that he impressed you that way?" Mr. Gilmour replied, "Yes, I think you have made a very accurate observation."

(2) Op.cit., pp.xliii-xliv.

(3) Op.cit., p.386-390.

(4) Gilmour, in private interview previously mentioned.

(5) Op.cit., p.390; quoted approvingly also by Craig, op.cit., p.xliv.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EPISTEMOLOGY

#### General Characteristics of the Theory of Knowledge

Theology, for Professor Warfield, was the science of God and not primarily the science of faith nor even the science of the Christian religion.<sup>1</sup> As such it deals primarily not with a mass of subjective experiences nor with a section of the history of thought, but rather with a body of objective facts.<sup>2</sup> From such a standpoint as this it can be quite readily understood how, in the context of late nineteenth and early twentieth century theological thought, the problems of authority and epistemology would loom large.

Ideally there is but one science, he maintained, the subject of which is the human spirit, and the object, all that is.<sup>3</sup> Actually, however, it is only in God's mind that science lies perfect -- the perfect comprehension of all that is. In the mind of perfected humanity the perfect ectypal science shall lie,<sup>4</sup> but not so now. "In the mind of sinful humanity struggling here below, there can lie only a broken reflection of the object, a reflection which is rather a deflection."<sup>5</sup>

After such a manner there is to be seen an awareness throughout the writings of Warfield of two essential aspects in the matter of knowledge: (1) the objective factor, that is to say, the truth as it exists before the mind; and (2) the subjective factor, the condition of man as a knowing subject, such as his finiteness, sinfulness and immaturity.

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(1) Studies in Theology, pp. 7, 56.

(2) Ibid., p. 51; The Right of Systematic Theology, p. 25.

(3) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. I, p. 115.

(4) Ibid., p. 116.

(5) Ibid., p. 116.



A considerable emphasis is placed by Warfield upon the rational and intellectual factor in the Christian faith, but a great many objections which might otherwise be made at this point are removed when we see another general characteristic of his theory of knowledge. It is the function of the whole man.<sup>1</sup> The intellect does not function in isolation from the feelings and the will; it is the entire human nature that knows, and in this fact is to be seen the explanation for the varying degrees of purity in which knowledge is acquired by men.<sup>2</sup> This is especially true in proportion as we rise in the scale of knowledge. "In that proportion embracing the truth becomes difficult and the preparation of the soul arduous."<sup>3</sup>

While it may be possible to speculate on "the essence" of God without being moved by it, Warfield refuses to admit that there can be any such thing as a bare intellectual assent to any vital conception of God. "Knowledge of God can never be otiose and inert; but must produce an effect in human souls ..."<sup>4</sup> Whether one's conception of God be true or false he will "feel in some way toward it, and act in some manner with respect to it," as certain as it is "he will think and feel and act at all."<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that intellectual assent to false notions of God yields idolatry while assent to true notions yields faith. For it is possible for the mind to receive true notions about God and to yield its assent to their truth without thereby coming to faith, but it is not possible to give this assent and remain unmoved. Even the devils who believed trembled.<sup>6</sup> Thus it is seen that for Warfield, knowledge of God has what we have come to think of as an "existential" character.<sup>7</sup>

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(1) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p.150.

(2) Ibid., p.150.

(3) Ibid., p.151.

(4) Calvin and Calvinism, p.37.

(5) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.234.

(6) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.144.

(7) H.R. Mackintosh describes existential thinking as "a mode of thought



Moreover, he sees this characteristic in the theology of Augustine<sup>1</sup> and Calvin,<sup>2</sup> the practicality of the latter being especially attractive,<sup>3</sup> and in his own sermons to students emphasized that the only instrument in our hands for producing godliness is the truth. "We are not primarily anything else but witnesses to truth," he wrote, "and the truth of God is the one lever by which we can pry at the hearts of men."<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the inclusion of a somewhat longer quotation will be justified in order to assist us in viewing his epistemology in the right perspective:

"The systematic theologian is preëminently a preacher of the gospel; and the end of his work is obviously not merely the logical arrangement of the truths which come under his hand but the moving of men, through their power, to love God with all their hearts and their neighbors as themselves; to choose their portion with the Saviour of their souls; to find and hold Him precious; and to recognise and yield to the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit whom He has sent. With such truth as this he will not dare to deal in a cold and merely scientific spirit, but will justly and necessarily permit its preciousness and its practical destination to determine the spirit in which he handles it, and to awaken the reverential love with which alone he should investigate its reciprocal relations. For this he needs to be suffused at all times with a sense of the unspeakable worth of the revelation which lies before him as the source of his material and with the personal bearings of its separate truths on his own heart and life; he needs to have had and to be having a full, rich and deep religious experience of the great doctrines with which he deals; he needs to be living close to his God, to be resting always on the bosom of his Redeemer, to be filled at all times with the manifest influences of the Holy Spirit. The student of systematic theology needs a very sensitive religious nature, a most thoroughly consecrated heart, and an outpouring of the Holy Ghost

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which concerns not the intellect merely, but the whole personality of the man who awakens to it and adapts it." Types of Modern Theology, p.219n.

(1) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p.150ff.

(2) Calvin and Calvinism, pp.37-39,256.

(3) "Calvin is not writing out of an abstract scientific impulse, but with the needs of souls, and, indeed, also with the special demands of the day in mind." Calvin and Calvinism, p.133. "Calvin expressly repudiates the scholastic point of view and is of set purpose simple and practical. He does not seek to obtain for himself or to recommend to others such a knowledge of God as merely 'raises idle speculation in the brain'; but such as 'shall be firm and fruitful' and have its seat in the heart." (p.173).

(4) Faith and Life, p.175.

upon him, such as will fill him with that spiritual discernment, without which all native intellect is in vain. He needs to be not merely a student, not merely a thinker, not merely a systematizer, not merely a teacher - he needs to be like the beloved disciple himself in the highest, truest, and holiest sense, a divine."<sup>1</sup>

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(1) Studies in Theology, pp.86-87.

## NATURAL REVELATION

## Man's Innate Knowledge of God.

From Calvin, Warfield takes up the idea of the correlation between the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self. Man himself is a "dependent, derived, imperfect, and responsible being,"<sup>1</sup> and in the very act of self-consciousness he must know himself as over against that Being on whom he is dependent, to whom he owes his being, over against whom his imperfection is manifest, and to whom he is responsible.<sup>2</sup> Man can no more escape this sensus divinitatis than he can escape self-consciousness.<sup>3</sup> Moreover this sensus provides man with far more than a mere empty conviction that such a being as that "Over-not-self" exists. It is a real notitia Dei insita - a natural knowledge of God,<sup>4</sup> existential in character, with respect to which man can avoid thinking, feeling, and acting only by avoiding thinking, feeling, and acting with respect to self.<sup>5</sup> This notitia is not to be conceived as "an actual and adequate representation of God from our birth," but rather "an innate faculty for knowing God after some fashion,"<sup>6</sup> the "fashion," in this instance, being knowledge of self. The sensus and notitia do not secure how a man will feel and act toward the Being in contrast with which he is conscious of dependence and responsibility; it merely insures that he will feel and act after some manner. In other words our native endowment is not merely a sensus divinitatis but also a semen religionis, "for what we call religion is just the reaction of the human soul to what it perceives God to be."<sup>7</sup> For this reason

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(1) Calvin and Calvinism, p.35.

(2) This is Warfield's understanding of Calvin in Inst., I,i,p.1.

(3) Calvin and Calvinism, p.36; The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.232.

(4) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.232.

(5) Ibid., p.233; Calvin and Calvinism, p.37.

(6) Rissen as quoted in Calvin and Calvinism, p.35n.

(7) Ibid., p.37.

man, so long as he remains man, will remain a religious being.<sup>1</sup>

Warfield's concept of man's faculty for knowledge, especially knowledge of God, comes out clearly in his exposition of the thought of Augustine.<sup>2</sup> Every man possesses as a result of his creation in the image of God, a body of ideas or thought forms which belong to his nature as a rational being. They are not thought of after a deistic manner as having been built into the structure of the mind once for all at its creation after which there is no need of God, but rather in a theistic manner in which God is no more the Creator than the Upholder and Director who continually impresses these intrinsic ideas on the soul of man. Thus the intellectual light of man is God alone [John 1:9],<sup>3</sup> and all knowledge is in a sense revelation.<sup>4</sup> The figure of a process of imprinting, as the device from a ring which is pressed upon the wax and thus makes an impression on the wax yet without leaving the ring, is employed by Augustine<sup>5</sup> to answer the question of how sinful men come to a knowledge of righteous laws. They certainly do not read them off from their own unrighteous hearts. It must be a result of this impressing, but it is not supposed, comments Warfield, "either that God in His substance invades the soul, or that the soul sees in God the ideas which constitute the intelligible world; although he (Augustine) insists steadily that these ideas are the ideas that are in God and that he who sees them, therefore, so far sees God - but in a glass darkly."<sup>6</sup> Warfield sees Augustine here as being informed by "the spirit of a pure theism, derived ... from those Scriptures which ... told him of the

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(1) The Right of Systematic Theology, p.82.

(2) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, article "Augustine's Doctrine of Knowledge," pp.135-225.

(3) Ibid., p.143.

(4) Ibid., p.147.

(5) "De Trinitate," XIV, 15.21 as referred to by Warfield, Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p.148.

(6) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p.148.



true light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world."<sup>1</sup> In commenting on this same verse [John 1:9] in a sermon before the Princeton students Warfield says,

"We must not, then, as Christians, assume an attitude of antagonism towards the truths of reason, or the truths of philosophy, or the truths of science, or the truths of history, or the truths of criticism. As children of the light, we must be careful to keep ourselves open to every ray of light. If it is light its source must be sought in Him who is the true light; if it is truth, it belongs of right to Him who is the plenitude of truth."<sup>2</sup>

Even apart from the matter of sin -- which is the main obstacle to be reckoned with in epistemology -- man, being finite and immature, cannot penetrate to the bottom of any object of knowledge. "We know, then, and can know, only in part; only part of what there is to know, and what we do know only in part."<sup>3</sup> Especially is this true concerning knowledge of God for He who exists and acts "above and beyond nature" and who "called nature into being by a word" cannot possibly be subject to the creature of His will in the mode of His activities.<sup>4</sup> Men are not capax Dei and hence, as Calvin says,<sup>5</sup> are merely toying with cold and frigid speculations when they attempt to search into what God is in Himself (quis sit apud se), into His essence (essentia), rather than being concerned with what kind of a person He is to us (qualis erga nos). This we can know only as we seek Him in His works, in which He draws near to us and familiarizes Himself to us as He wills to be revealed.<sup>6</sup> We are not thereby being mocked, however, for we know "that God is what His works and acts reveal Him to be; though it must be admitted that His works and acts reveal not His metaphysical Being but His personal relations -- not what He is apud se, but what He

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(1) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p.146.

(2) "Incarnate Truth", Opuscula, VI, p.39.

(3) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p.153.

(4) Studies in Theology, p.33.

(5) I,ii,2 referred to by Warfield, Calvin and Calvinism, p.152.

(6) Calvin and Calvinism, p.153.

is quoad nos."<sup>1</sup>

For Warfield, Calvin's great contribution here was precisely the fact that he called men "from an a priori construction of an imaginary deity to an a posteriori knowledge of the Deity which really is and really acts."<sup>2</sup>

#### God's Revelation in Nature and History

God did not leave men to the notitia Dei insita for the framing of their religion, although therefrom proceeds a propensity to religion which secures that all men shall have a religion.<sup>3</sup> The sense of divinity which God imparts to men discovers divinity only where divinity is and only by a perception of it.<sup>4</sup> But since it is hopeless for finite man to attempt to contemplate God as He is in Himself, it remains for God to manifest Himself after a manner suitable to perception by man. This He does in nature and history. As it is impossible to be self-conscious without being God-conscious, so neither can we look abroad on nature nor contemplate the course of events without seeing Him in His works and deeds.<sup>5</sup> Warfield gives considerable importance to Calvin's assertion as to the clarity, universality and convincingness of this natural revelation of God [chiefly Inst. I, v.]. He maintains that here Calvin has not lost his practical religious motive in speculative elaborations which merely round out his systematic views of truth. On the contrary, the natural revelation is a real help to the vital knowledge of God.<sup>6</sup> Warfield is as quick to point out as is Calvin that due to the subjective sin-bred inability of man, he cannot read this revelation aright and that the manifestation, though possessing no limitations in itself, is nevertheless "ineffective to produce a just knowledge

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(1) Calvin and Calvinism, p.154.

(2) Ibid., p.154.

(3) Ibid., p.39.

(4) Ibid., p.40, re. Calvin's Inst. I, v.

(5) Ibid. p.40.

(6) Ibid., p.41.

of God in the sinful heart."<sup>1</sup> For the man of faith under the guidance of the Word and the Spirit, God's revelation in nature and history is of considerable assistance in gaining knowledge of God, though even here it would be truer to say that knowledge received from supernatural revelation is enriched by contemplating God in nature and history rather than to say that the man of faith can actually learn of God from nature as over against the Scripture. The truths of nature are significantly termed "commentaries on the supernaturally revealed truth."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, to a man in sin, God's revelation in nature and history has as its chief theological effect that of rendering him inexcusable before God.<sup>3</sup>

An odd fact about the theology of Warfield is that despite his stress on the importance of God's revelation in creation and providence and its legitimate role in developing a knowledge of God,<sup>4</sup> we do not have any samples from Warfield's pen of reasoned arguments on the nature and existence of God drawn from the field of natural science. His stress is on the hypothetical sufficiency of this revelation and the actual insufficiency. "Nature is the handiwork of God in space; history marks His pathway through time. And both nature and history are as infallible teachers as (special) revelation itself, had we but skill to read their message aright."<sup>5</sup> In these words, "had we but skill to read their message aright," we have an allusion to the awful fact of sin the noetic effects and cure for which are matters of prime importance for Warfield.

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(1) Calvin and Calvinism, p.42, re Calvin's Inst. I,v.

(2) "Incarnate Truth," Op.VI, p.39.

(3) Calvin and Calvinism, p.46.

(4) Cf. Ibid., p.147.

(5) "Incarnate Truth," Op.VI, p.39.

## NOETIC EFFECTS OF SIN

Calvin's view of the epistemological situation occasioned by sin is not easily reduced to a few pat phrases, nor indeed is Warfield's. It is both interesting and significant that the very problems and apparent inconsistencies present in Calvin at this point emerge also in Warfield's writings in a strikingly similar form. These problems, in the main, revolve around the following four points: (1) All of man's faculties have been corrupted by sin yet there remains some knowledge of God even among the most degraded. (2) This small bit of light is totally insufficient to lead man to a saving knowledge of God. (3) Special revelation comes to man from without him and by it the Spirit quickens the dead soul to faith and begins to rectify the corruption of sin. (4) The coming of this special revelation carries with it a "negative sign"<sup>1</sup> upon natural theology and forever brands as a thief and a robber any who would seek to approach God by any other than the new and living way, Christ Jesus. A criticism from the standpoint of Calvin himself would appear to be the fairest one to offer such a professed Calvinist as Warfield. In this respect it seems that Warfield has not fully represented Calvin's view of the role of the Holy Spirit in working faith, allowing a certain rationalism to enter into his thought; nor has he allowed the "negative sign" aspect of special revelation to be carried out consistently.

Drawn out a little more into detail, Warfield's teaching runs as follows. Despite the sense of deity engraved on all hearts<sup>2</sup> and the rich manifestation of God in creation and providence,<sup>3</sup> men fail utterly to attain any certain and

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(1) Dowey's term, The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology, "While it is true that a negative sign stands over the whole revelation in creation in Calvin's theology, we must not allow this sign to erase from our minds the magnitude of the sum thus negated. A negative sign is meaningless before a zero" (p.72).

(2) Calvin and Calvinism, p.44; Cf. Inst.I,iv,4.

(3) Calvin and Calvinism, p. 44; Cf. Inst.II, vi,1.



sure knowledge of God and consequently fail to produce any genuine piety.<sup>1</sup> This objective revelation which is more than sufficient to produce an adequate knowledge of God in the normal subject fails because man as a sinner is no longer a "normal" subject.<sup>2</sup> Sin has destroyed the root of man's trust in God by altering the relation to God in which he stands.<sup>3</sup> Thus faith turns to fear and despair, and love to enmity; man is depraved [homo totus et omnis] in every department of his being. "There is no faculty or disposition, appetite or propensity, or affection, into which depravity does not penetrate,"<sup>4</sup> and "what is in itself corrupt cannot but be corrupted in all its activities."<sup>5</sup> In Augustine's figure of the ring and the wax, the wax must now be thought of as inferior in quality and hence in no condition to retain with exactness or clearness the device which is impressed upon it.<sup>6</sup>

In describing the natural man's inability to read aright the revelation of God, Warfield's terminology -- derived directly from Calvin -- is significant. Most generally when speaking of the knowledge of God which the man of faith receives through special revelation, the noun "knowledge" is preceded by some modifier such as, "certain, sound or distinct,"<sup>7</sup> "true and sound"<sup>8</sup> and "competent ... such as redeemed sinners have in Christ."<sup>9</sup> This terminology alone would seem to suggest that there is some sense in which the man in sin still retains some knowledge of God.<sup>10</sup> It is corrupt, yes, but Warfield persists

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(1) Calvin and Calvinism, p.45; Cf. Inst.I,iv,1.

(2) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, pp.156,176; Calvin and Calvinism, pp.32,43.

(3) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.144; Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p.160; Calvin and Calvinism, p.46.

(4) Perfectionism, vol.2, p.451.

(5) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.103.

(6) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p.149.

(7) Calvin and Calvinism, p.45; Cf. Inst.I,iv,1.

(8) Calvin and Calvinism, p.44; Cf. Inst.I,vi,2.

(9) Calvin and Calvinism, p.37.

(10) At least four times in his Comm Jn. 1:5 Calvin joins together statements concerning the light in man and the darkness which this light is. "Light

in terming it knowledge. It is on the basis of it that sinful men everywhere have a religion, though no genuine piety remains.<sup>1</sup>

Here it must be pointed out that Warfield, writing at the turn of the nineteenth century in strenuous conflict with Liberalism, felt under no more compulsion to assert the native gifts and ability of man than did Calvin writing in the sixteenth century in conflict with Rome. Nevertheless Warfield refuses to view the sensus divinitatis of Calvin as a mere working hypothesis by which he explained the universality of religion.<sup>2</sup> It is rather part of the essential nature of man, and "sin clearly has not destroyed or altered in its essential nature any one of man's faculties, although it has affected the operation of them all."<sup>3</sup>

Through the operation of the sensus divinitatis man has a troubled con-

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has been turned into darkness, and yet ... amidst the thick darkness of the human mind, some remaining sparks of the brightness still shine." "The glory of Christ may be said to be darkened amidst this corruption of nature. But, on the other hand, the Evangelist maintains that, in the midst of the darkness, there are still some remains of light which show in some degree the divine power of Christ." After such a manner Calvin teaches that "though by his revolt he [man] lost the light of understanding yet he still sees and understands, so that what he naturally possesses from the grace of God is not entirely destroyed." It should not be supposed that Calvin teaches that man, by means of the remnant of this possession can make a partial approach to God, even if ever so small. "Natural reason will never direct men to Christ." On the other hand it is not entirely accurate to say that man's God-given faculties for receiving God's revelation are absolutely inert. It is more a matter of "seeing they see not." This we take it, is essentially the position of Warfield as well.

(1) Calvin and Calvinism, p.45; Cf. Inst.I,iv,1.

(2) Calvin maintains expressly that even those sinners who have smothered the few sparks which enable them to discover the glory of God, "are not altogether ignorant of God." (Inst.I,iv,4.) He obviously feels most burdened to prove the "smothering" rather than remaining knowledge.

(3) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.145; Cf. Dowey's comment on the sin-distorted functioning of the sensus divinitatis. He is summarizing Calvin's view, "When distorted by sin the sensus divinitatis issues in degrading and frightening inversions of true reverence, secret dread and open idolatry. This cannot be explained intellectualistically. These sinners have more than a wrong concept of God. They are standing before the qualitatively Other One, and their sin is actual blasphemy in his presence. We have seen Calvin picture it vividly. If this sense is a knowledge of God's existence, it is also an overwhelming and ineludible apprehension of his awfulness and majesty. It is the

science which, as such, "is the voice of God proclaiming war in man."<sup>1</sup> A sense of sin is universal; only the believer possesses true peace and joy.<sup>2</sup> "Everywhere, man knows that because he is a sinner, he is at enmity with God."<sup>3</sup> Hence the world-wide usage of sacrificial worship; though even here, as deep-rooted as the sense of sin is in every human conscience, the pride of man is no less ready to find manifestation even in his religious practices so that no proper repentance is forthcoming.<sup>4</sup> This, of course, is only wrought by Christ through the conjunction of the Word and Spirit.<sup>5</sup>

We must ask this question of Warfield. Is there any continuity or connecting point between the sinner's corrupted knowledge of God and that redemptive knowledge of God which is graciously bestowed in special revelation? Though the final answer to this question must wait upon the completed investigation of Warfield's epistemology, a brief summary of his sermon on Acts 17:23<sup>6</sup> will be sufficient to indicate that the answer will be, in a sense, yes; in a sense, no. We are asked to bear in mind first of all that the charge against Paul at Athens was that he was "a proclaimer of strange deities," a charge which he had no intention whatever of denying.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, though the hinge on which the whole speech turns is the declaration that the heathen are steeped in ignorance and require the light of divine instruction, — in effect, "You worship you know not what" — Paul "institutes a certain connection between what they

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mysterium tremendum." The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology, pp.54,f.

(1) Faith and Life, p.332.

(2) The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.51ff; Biblical Doctrines, p.411.

(3) Faith and Life, p.333.

(4) Biblical Doctrines, p.411.

(5) Perfectionism, vol.1, pp.36,337; Calvin and Calvinism, pp.82f; The Right of Systematic Theology, p.90.

(6) "What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you" (Revised Version, as quoted The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.219). The sermon, "False Religions and the True," is of basic importance in revealing the relation Warfield held to exist between natural and revealed religion. The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.219-254.

(7) Ibid., p.223.



worship and the God he was commending to them". "He does not entirely condemn their worship even of a not-known god; he rather makes it a point of attachment for proclaiming the higher worship of the known God of heaven and earth which he is recommending to them."<sup>1</sup> Paul, in fine, commends the religiousness of the Athenians<sup>2</sup> but condemns their religion,<sup>3</sup> that is to say, the particular mode in which their religiousness expressed itself.<sup>4</sup> In this sense Christianity does not abolish or supersede natural religion; "it vitalizes it, and confirms it, and fills it with richer content," "It supplements it, and, in supplementing it, it transforms it and makes it, with its supplements, a religion fitted for and adequate to the needs of sinful men."<sup>5</sup> Warfield can even speak of Christianity as "the supernatural supplement to the natural religion which lies beneath all the horrible perversion of paganism."<sup>6</sup> There is then, a continuity of a sort.

On the other hand Warfield is explicit on the charge against the Athenians. It was idolatry, — an illustration of man's repeated withdrawal from God as recorded at the end of Romans I. Athens is a shining example of the fact that "not by all its wisdom ... has the world come to know God, but in these higher elaborations also, becoming vain in its imaginations, its foolish heart has only become darkened."<sup>7</sup> Man's native religiousness is not to be thought of as a possession by utilization of which he can reach God, for when left to itself to blossom into religious life the result is always the same — idolatry. "Man's religions are among his worse crimes."<sup>8</sup> The fact that his spiritual sight has

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(1) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.225.

(2) Ibid., p.226.

(3) Ibid., p.228.

(4) Ibid., p.225.

(5) Studies in Theology, p.659.

(6) Ibid., p.660.

(7) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.229.

(8) Ibid., p.228; Calvin and Calvinism, p.45; Studies in Theology, p.660.



not been totally destroyed but only seriously corrupted does not alleviate the seriousness of his state but in a sense makes it worse, for he views the manifestation of God in nature and history only to corrupt what is presented to him and so turn the truth of God into a lie. Thus the necessity for the proclamation of the known God is absolute. God had for a time, no doubt, left the nations of the world to their own religious nature, but on God's part, Warfield tells us, "this was intended rather as a demonstration of their incapacity than as a hopeful opportunity afforded them; and in its results it provides an empirical proof of the absolute necessity of His interference with direct guidance."<sup>1</sup> All natural religion is thereby treated as "degrading to man and insulting to God."<sup>2</sup> In this sense, the relation which the knowledge of God received from special revelation bears to that which the sinner reads from nature is one of negative criticism.

Warfield's application of this teaching to the contemporary scene illustrates further his thought on natural religion. While the altar to the unknown God bore mute testimony to the blindness of the heathen, it was in one sense the least degraded expression of Athenian religion. "At least no distinctive foulness was attributed to a god confessedly unknown."<sup>3</sup> A modern parallel to this is seen in the effort to reduce religion to pure feeling thus making it independent of every intellectual conception. "Deisidaimonism" he calls it; an uncouth term for an unlovely thing.<sup>4</sup> With an explicit reference to Schleiermacher and an obvious reference to Harnack, Warfield pronounces the religion of pure feeling to be natural religion and, as such, to be deserving of the Biblical judgment upon all man-made religions. The Scylla of intellectualism must be

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(1) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.235.  
 (2) Ibid., p.225.  
 (3) Ibid., p.227.  
 (4) Ibid., p.249.

avoided it is true, but to harken to the plea for an "undogmatic Christianity" is to run into the "Charybdis of mere naturalism."<sup>1</sup> Warfield perceives that the issue at stake in granting validity to natural religion is nothing less than the grace of God, for he closes the sermon with these splendid words:

"Jesus our Priest and our Sacrifice, let us keep  
our eyes set on Him!...

'Nothing in my hand I bring,

Simply to Thy cross I cling' -

here - and let us bless God for it - here is the  
essence of Christianity. It is all of God and  
nothing of ourselves."<sup>2</sup>

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(1) The Power of God Unto Salvation, 251.

(2) Ibid., p.254.

## SPECIAL REVELATION

There is a fundamental division among all the religions of men, ~~and since religion is but the reaction of the human soul in the presence of God, among all man's knowledge of God - or we might say, men's theologies.~~ This is just the division between the man-made and the God-made.<sup>1</sup> Warfield acknowledges that all knowledge concerning God is in a sense the result of revelation,<sup>2</sup> and that all religions contain an element of revelation inasmuch as God is a person, and persons are known only as they make themselves known.<sup>3</sup> Yet revelation when thought of in the distinctly Christian sense, holds such a pregnant meaning for Warfield that he speaks of Christianity as the revealed religion as opposed to the unrevealed religions of the heathen.<sup>4</sup> Occasionally he names the two groups of religions in terms of the sources of their knowledge, general and special revelation;<sup>5</sup> but most often he refers <sup>to</sup> <sub>A</sub> them as natural and supernatural religions.<sup>6</sup>

Soteriology forms the most distinguishing feature of the religion of the Bible. According to it God has intervened extraordinarily in the course of the sinful world's development for the salvation of men otherwise lost.<sup>7</sup> While general revelation is adapted to man as man, special revelation is adapted to man as sinner.<sup>8</sup> But since man is not normal but sinful, general revelation is forever inadequate to lead man as a sinner to a saving knowledge of God.<sup>9</sup> Not only have men been unable to reach God by means of the natural revelation

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(1) Studies in Theology, p.649.

(2) Revelation and Inspiration, p.37.

(3) Studies in Theology, p.649.

(4) Ibid., p.650.

(5) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.236.

(6) Studies in Theology, pp.649ff; Revelation and Inspiration, pp.3ff.

(7) Ibid., p.3.

(8) Ibid., p.6.

(9) Ibid., p.5; The Power of God Unto Salvation; Studies in Theology, p.659.

alone, but due to "the darkening of their senseless hearts by sin and to the vanity of their sin-bred reasonings [Rom.1:21ff] ... they have supplanted the truth of God by a lie and have come to worship and serve the creature rather than the ever-blessed Creator."<sup>1</sup> For this very reason a true and saving knowledge of God must come to sinful man from without himself. The movement is exclusively from God to man; on this Warfield insists strongly.

"Just because we do not see in revelation man reaching up lame hands toward God and feeling fumblingly after Him if haply he may find Him, but God graciously reaching strong hands down to man, bringing him help in his need, we see in it a gift from God, not a creation of man's."<sup>2</sup>

There is no substitute for the objective Word as the proper source for our religious knowledge. All forms of mysticism in which one looks within himself for the source of knowledge of God, be it to the "inner-light," the "Christian consciousness" or even the Holy Spirit or "Christ within us the hope of glory" - the terminology will not alter the fact - amount ultimately to denials of Christianity. "The issue which mysticism creates is thus just the issue of Christianity." "We may be mystics, or we may be Christians. We cannot be both."<sup>3</sup> For Christ is history and Christ's cross is history, and mysticism which seeks solely eternal verities can have nothing to do with time and that which has occurred in time. "When he has found God the mystic has left Christ behind."<sup>4</sup> He will not allow a resurrection from the dead, but only an awakening from sleep. The Gospel, on the other hand, proclaims a Christ who enters the heart not to arouse what was dormant or set to work something which has belonged to man from the beginning, but to produce new life.<sup>5</sup> "God has not sent us [ministers] into the world to say the most plausible things we think of; to

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, p.5.

(2) Studies in Theology, p.650.

(3) Ibid., p.666.

(4) Quoted from W. Herrmann by Warfield, Studies in Theology, p.663.

(5) Studies in Theology, p.664.



teach man what they already believe. He has sent us to preach unpalatable truths to a world lying in wickedness; apparently absurd things to men who are carnal and cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God."<sup>1</sup> We see then that Warfield insists that men must attend to God's supernaturally revealed Word and to it alone for a saving knowledge of Himself.

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Not only is soteriology the distinguishing feature of God's special supernatural revelation - there is no salvation in natural religion - but salvation and revelation are intimately related in that it is primarily in His divine acts of grace that God reveals Himself; or conversely, it is through the supernatural revelation of His grace to His people that God prepared salvation for them.<sup>2</sup> Revelation then, and also of course salvation, is given progressively being worked out through a process of historical development. This notion of process as the ordinary mode of Divine working is most important for Warfield; God created the world by process, He peopled it by process, wrought redemption by process, and causes salvation to be accomplished in the life of the individual by process.<sup>3</sup> Especially do we see this idea of process being insisted upon in the doctrine of sanctification and eschatology.

Revelation and redemption,<sup>4</sup> come to their "glorious completion in Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup> This must be remembered from the start, viz., that the Word of God

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(1) Faith and Life, p.242.

(2) Revelation and Inspiration, p.11.

(3) The Plan of Salvation, p.101; The Saviour of the World, p.97.

(4) "Redemption" is a term which is generally applied to the objective work which God has accomplished in Christ on the grounds of which salvation is accomplished. "Redemption is the payment of the price; salvation is the 'delivery of the goods'" (Faith and Life, p.293). Cf. Studies in Theology, pp.25-46; Critical Reviews, p.210.

(5) Revelation and Inspiration, p.11.

"has come to us, and not as a mere spoken message, but as an incarnate person ..."<sup>1</sup> Warfield sees all the forms of God's special or redemptive revelation as subsumed under one or the other of three modes - (1) theophany or external manifestation, (2) prophecy or internal manifestation, and (3) inspiration or conversive operation. All, that is, except the revelation, as he puts it, "not through, but in, Jesus Christ." He stands above the "diverse manners" by which revelation has otherwise come and sums up in Himself all that has been or can be made known of God and His redemption. Even in this "He does not so much make a revelation of God as Himself is the revelation of God. He does not merely disclose God's purpose of redemption, He is unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."<sup>2</sup> Very little value can be attached to metaphysical reasoning, indeed "we should not be greatly disturbed were all of it pronounced inconclusive," since we have "a more sure word of prophecy," Christ Jesus who has "brought life and immortality to light."<sup>3</sup> He is no less the end of revelation than He is the end of the law.

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Revelation is not conveyed by mere fact or deed alone, but by a fact and deed understood. Thus in the Bible we are given not merely a list of naked facts, but a rich account and development of significant facts held in a special meaning. With the interpretation of these facts, rather than with their mere record, a large part of the Bible is solely employed, as, for example, the

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(1) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.24. These are words of Bishop Gore quoted approvingly by Warfield.

(2) Revelation and Inspiration, p.28.

(3) These remarks Warfield made at the close of a review of Some Dogmas of Religion, by J.M.E. McTaggart. This book was "a reasoned plea for atheism" and in the review Warfield enters into certain arguments with the author. In the quotation we have cited, Warfield has reference to his own arguments.

epistles of Paul: and even when the immediate object is the record of the facts themselves, they are not set down in isolation, but in a distinct doctrinal context.<sup>1</sup> In a more general sense "the entirety of the New Testament is but the explanatory word accompanying and giving its effect to the fact of Christ."<sup>2</sup> The Bible is of course not to be treated as a theological textbook or a systematic treatise, since what was written was written in reference to the needs of the situation the various writers were required to face.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless Warfield insists that the Bible must be allowed to announce to us doctrines as well as facts. The two cannot be separated. Christianity, of all the religions of the world, is an historical one, for in it we have God acting in history for man's salvation,<sup>4</sup> but the meaning of God's acts "enters as vitally into our Christian faith and hope as the acts themselves."<sup>5</sup>

"Just because it is a true religion, which offers to man a real redemption that was really wrought out in history, its facts and doctrines entirely coalesce. All its facts are doctrines and all its doctrines are facts. The incarnation is a doctrine: no eye saw the Son of God descend from heaven and enter the virgin's womb: but if it be not a true fact as well, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins. The resurrection of Christ is a fact: an occurrence in time level to the apprehension of men and witnessed by their adequate testimony: but it is at the same time the cardinal doctrine of Christianity."<sup>6</sup>

Warfield was constrained to admit a certain truth, on the surface at least, of the insistent cry of various religious positivists, viz., that Christianity is constituted by one fact only - Jesus Christ. For in his own teaching,

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(1) The Right of Systematic Theology, pp.41-42.

(2) Revelation and Inspiration, p.28.

(3) Perfectionism, vol.I, p.274.

(4) "As histories, the narratives of Abraham's and Joseph's lives, for example, show us what God is, and what God has done and may be expected to do again for those who serve Him: they give us a real God..As legends they make known to us only how some old dreamers would fain think of God: they give us an imaginary God only." "The difference between the two views is just the difference between the actual and the longed for." "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.165.

(5) Studies in Theology, p.44.

(6) The Right of Systematic Theology, p.34.



especially in his doctrine of faith, he constantly emphasized the importance of the object of our faith, as opposed to the subjective function of faith itself.<sup>1</sup>

"Above all, it is a great thing to have our eyes focused on Jesus Christ as the great, the constitutive fact of Christianity, about whom all else gathers, from whom all else receives its significance, whom to have is indeed to have all."<sup>2</sup>

Christianity, however, does not merely consist of "Jesus Christ," of Whom we are free to conceive after our various thought forms be they Hegelian, Aristotelian, or Platonic, — this would be to identify Christianity with our changing schools — but rather of that Jesus Christ which the apostles give us. Accordingly it is impossible to strip away elements of the "apostolical dogma" in an effort to secure the fundamental fact-basis of Christianity; for such elements themselves enter into the essence of Christianity.<sup>3</sup> The propositional and the personal elements of revelation cannot, therefore, be set in opposition.

"Christianity is the person of Jesus Christ. Still we must enter into relations with this person. In order that two moral subjects should communicate with one another there must needs be manifestations between them. A person manifests himself clearly to us only by his acts and his words; and he has value for us only as we form for ourselves a certain idea of him. Christianity is therefore essentially, above all, a person; but on pain of reducing it to a magic, which would no longer possess any ethical and, consequently, no longer possess any religious quality, we must needs grant that Christianity, precisely because it is essentially a person, is also a body of facts and of ideas."<sup>4</sup>

The Bible, by being a record of these facts and ideas through which the person of Christ is known, becomes thereby more than a mere record. It becomes

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(1) Perfectionism, vol. II, pp. 518, 519; "Princeton Theological Review", vol. I, pp. 674, 142; Perfectionism, vol. I, p. 337; Faith and Life, p. 397.

(2) The Right of Systematic Theology, p. 49.

(3) Ibid., p. 61.

(4) Henri Bois, Le Dogme Grec, p. 107; quoted with enthusiastic approval by Warfield, The Right of Systematic Theology, p. 60. The translation is Warfield's.



itself "a substantial part of God's revelation"<sup>1</sup> and "one of these redemptive acts, having its own part to play in the great work of establishing and building up the Kingdom of God."<sup>2</sup> This brings us to a consideration of what is probably the most distinctive factor in Warfield's epistemology, his view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible.

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, p.47.

(2) Ibid., p.156.

## INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

The logical method by which Warfield proceeded in establishing his doctrine of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures is extremely important. The first step was to ascertain what view the Bible holds of itself, or in other words, what the Scriptures record as the teaching of Christ and His apostles. This view, once determined, commends itself to us as true by the same weight of evidence as any other doctrine taught by Christ and His apostles. The whole body of evidence which goes to authenticate the Biblical writers as trustworthy teachers of doctrine must be allowed to support the contention that the Biblical doctrine of inspiration is true.<sup>1</sup> Of course, we may not accept this doctrine; but if not, we cannot escape the fact that we have rejected the Biblical writers as trustworthy witnesses to doctrine and have thereby put under question the other doctrines they teach such as the doctrine of the resurrection or the Trinity.<sup>2</sup> The inspiration of the Bible is not the most fundamental of Christian doctrines<sup>3</sup>, nor is its infallibility the ground of the whole Christian faith.<sup>4</sup> It does appeal to our acceptance, however, on the same ground as every other element of faith, viz., on the ground of the "authenticity, credibility and general trustworthiness of the New Testament writings."<sup>5</sup>

The a priori possibility must be admitted to exist that the Bible's view of itself may be wrong. After all, such claims have been put forth by other writings and have been found utterly inconsistent with the observed characteristics of those writings. Thus the Biblical doctrine of inspiration must be

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, pp. 209, 224, 212.

(2) Ibid., p. 219.

(3) Ibid., p. 210.

(4) On this point Warfield expresses agreement with the protest which Marcus Dods raised in his controversial address before the meeting of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches at London, 1888. Cf. Revelation and Inspiration, p. 211.

(5) Revelation and Inspiration, p. 212.

tested by a comparison with its actual phenomena; but *approaching* the phenomena of Scripture in order to test a doctrine already formulated is a considerably different matter from *approaching* the phenomena of Scripture in order to formulate a doctrine of inspiration. The latter could be done with confidence only upon the assumption that we knew all there is to know about the Bible. The former method, however, can be pursued and a conclusion reached even before all the problems and difficulties are resolved.<sup>1</sup> This should not deter us, argues Warfield, for if we wait until all the problems for our understanding are resolved we could never in this life believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, nor the Incarnation, nor almost any of the items of faith.<sup>2</sup>

Warfield, admittedly then, comes to the phenomena of Scripture and the various critical problems which arise therefrom with a presumption against the reality of any fact alleged to be inconsistent with the Biblical doctrine of inspiration.<sup>3</sup> This is not a recommendation to employ strained or artificial exegesis: if we cannot harmonize the difficulties by a sober exegesis they would be better left unharmonized. "Our individual fertility in exegetical expedients" is not the measure of truth.<sup>4</sup> However, not to be able to see the harmony is one thing; but to be able to affirm that no harmony is possible on any conceivable hypothesis is quite another thing.<sup>5</sup> The latter is the type of proof which Warfield demanded as sufficient ground for rejecting the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. Difficulties could be, and indeed were present to his mind,<sup>6</sup> but these, he believed it reasonable to suppose, would receive their

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, p.215.

(2) Ibid., p.216.

(3) Ibid., p.217.

(4) Ibid., p.218.

(5) Ibid., pp.219,421.

(6) "We believe this doctrine ... primarily because it is the doctrine which Christ and His apostles believed, and which they have taught us. It may sometimes be difficult to take our stand frankly by the side of Christ and His apostles. It will always be safe" (Revelation and Inspiration, p.74)

explanation with advancing knowledge.<sup>1</sup> None of them pass into the category of indubitable errors.<sup>2</sup> Should they, however, pass into this category the Biblical doctrine would have to be given up,<sup>3</sup> but in so doing it should be recognized that a charge of teaching false doctrine is thereby laid at the door of the Biblical writers. Herein lies the importance of proceeding according to the proper logical method for if the facts drawn from the phenomena of Scripture are taken as co-factors with the Biblical teachings as to its inspiration the induction is liable to lead to a modification of that teaching without a clear recognition of what is being done.<sup>4</sup>

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### The Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration

The Biblical doctrine of inspiration Warfield believed to be that of plenary verbal inspiration. It is defined as "that extraordinary, supernatural influence (or, passively, the result of it,) exerted by the Holy Ghost on the writers of our Sacred Books, by which their words were rendered also the words of God, and, therefore, perfectly infallible."<sup>5</sup> Actually the term "inspiration not being a Biblical one and possessing etymological implications not perfectly accordant with the Biblical conception, Warfield cautions that in using it we are not to conceive of the Scriptures as "a human product breathed into by the Divine Spirit, and thus heightened in its qualities or endowed with new qualities; but as a Divine product produced through the instrumentality of men."<sup>6</sup> The θεοπνευστος of II Tim. 3:16 is translated "God-breathed," i.e.

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, p. 222.

(2) Ibid., pp. 225, 422, 423.

(3) Ibid., p. 219.

(4) Ibid., p. 223.

(5) Ibid., p. 396.

(6) Ibid., p. 99.



produced by the creative breath of God,<sup>1</sup> rather than "God-inbreathed" (as in the Vulgate and in Luther), or "God-imbued" (as is in Ewald and Cremer).<sup>2</sup> II Peter 1:19-21 also gives the emphatic assertion that the men who spoke from God did so being "borne" by the Holy Spirit so that the things they spoke were not from themselves but from God.<sup>3</sup> The emphasis is not upon the spiritual value of Scripture primarily, but on the Divine trustworthiness of Scripture.<sup>4</sup> In John 10:34-35 Jesus ascribes legal authority to the entirety of Scripture, for He adduces a passage from the Psalms with the accompanying comment, "Is it not written in your law?" "Law" is materially synonymous with "Scripture" as is seen by the variation of the formula of adduction in contiguous verses. What is thus implied in quoting Scripture as law is made explicit in the utterance "and the Scripture cannot be broken." Warfield's comment is revealing:

"The movement of thought is to the effect that, because it is impossible for the Scripture - the term is perfectly general and witnesses to the unitary character of Scripture (it is all, for the purpose in hand, of a piece) - to be withstood, therefore this particular Scripture which is cited must be taken as of irrefragable authority."<sup>5</sup>

This conception of Scripture supplies the ground of all Jesus' appeals to Scripture as "an indefectible authority whose determination is final."<sup>6</sup> He

(1) Revelation and Inspiration, pp.263,274.

(2) Herman Cremer had advanced the latter view, the resulting characteristic of which was to emphasize the effects of Scripture rather than their origin. Warfield adopted Cremer's conclusion in a paper on "Paul's Doctrine of the Old Testament," published in "The Presbyterian Quarterly," July, 1899, but in the following year reversed his evaluation of Cremer's position in an article "God-Inspired Scripture," published in the "Presbyterian and Reformed Review", vol.XI, pp.89-139. After a thorough consideration of the text and especially Cremer's arguments, Warfield arrives at the "God-breathed" translation and its implications as an alternative which, he says, was not before the mind of Cremer. Cf. Revelation and Inspiration, pp.234,268.

(3) Revelation and Inspiration, p.82.

(4) Ibid., p.83.

(5) Ibid., pp.85-86.

(6) Ibid., p.86.

appeased the temptations of Satan with no other weapon than the final "It is written," (Matt.4:4,7,10; Luke 4:4,8). He rebukes His disciples (Luke 24:25ff.) for being "foolish and slow of heart" not to "believe in" (in the sense of letting their faith rest securely on, as on a firm foundation) "all" (without limit to subject matter) "that the prophets" (cf. v.27 as equivalent to "all the scriptures") "have spoken."<sup>1</sup> The necessity of the fulfillment of all that is written is strongly asserted (Luke 24:44; Mark 14:49; John 13:18, 17:12; Mark 9:12,13; Matt.26:31; Mark 14:27; Luke 20:17; Mat.26:54). He blames the Jews not for searching the Scriptures (John 5:39) nor for thinking to have in them eternal life, but for reading with a veil lying upon their hearts which He fain would take away (II Cor.3:15f).<sup>2</sup> He expresses wonder at the little effect to which Scripture had been read, not because it had been looked into too curiously but because of the insufficient trust and earnestness employed (Mark 12:10; Matt.21:42, 21:26). The source of all error in Divine things is ignorance of the Scripture: "Is it not for this cause that ye err, that ye know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God?" (Mark 12:24; Matt. 22:25). He makes explicit reference to Gen.2:24 as a declaration of God's (Matt.19:4); "He who made them ... said"; "what therefore God hath joined together ..." "Yet this passage," comments Warfield, "does not give us a saying of God's recorded in Scripture, but just the word of Scripture itself, and can be treated as a declaration of God's only on the hypothesis that all Scripture is a declaration of God's."<sup>3</sup> The testimony of Jesus, Warfield says in summary, "is that whatever stands written in Scripture is a word of God."<sup>4</sup>

The New Testament writers in dealing with the Old Testament indicate a

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, p.87.

(2) Ibid., p.88.

(3) Ibid., p.89.

(4) Ibid., p.89.

certain confusion of current speech between "Scripture" and "God", "the outgrowth of a deep-seated conviction that the word of Scripture is the word of God."<sup>1</sup> In one class of passages words of Scripture are quoted as if they were words of God (Rom.9:17; Gal.3:8); in another words of God are quoted as if they were words of Scripture (Matt.29:4,5; Heb.3:7; Acts 4:24,25; 13:34,35; Heb.1:6).<sup>2</sup> To these are added a third class in which Scripture is adduced with a subjectless λέγει or φησι in which the authoritative subject - whether the divinely given Word or God Himself - is taken for granted (Rom.9:15, 15:10; Gal.3:16; Eph.4:8, 5:14; I Cor.6:16, 15:27; II Cor.6:2; Heb.8:5; James 4:6).<sup>3</sup> All of this shows "an absolute identification, in the minds of these writers, of 'Scripture' with the speaking God."<sup>4</sup>

Moreover the New Testament writers did not look upon their own teaching as any less authoritative than that of the Old. They knew God had made them sufficient (II Cor.3:5,6). They have full confidence that they speak "by the Holy Ghost" (I Peter 1:12), to Whom they attribute both the matter and form of their teaching (I Cor.2:13). With the utmost assurance of their teaching (Gal.1:7,8), they issue authoritative commands (I Thess.4:2,14; II Thess.3: 6,12), and make it the test of whether one has the Spirit that he should recognize what they demand as commandments of God (I Cor.14:37).<sup>5</sup> These claims are made not merely for their oral teaching but for the written as well: (I Cor.14:37) "the things I wrote ..." and, (II Thess.3:14) "our word by this epistle." II Peter 1:21 places Paul's epistles in the category of Scripture, while Paul himself joins words from Deuteronomy and Luke as a saying of Scripture (I Tim.5:18).<sup>6</sup>

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, p.92.

(2) Ibid., p.284.

(3) Ibid., p.285.

(4) Ibid., p.284.

(5) Ibid., p.109.

(6) Ibid., p.110.

In identifying the Scriptures as "the very Word of God itself,"<sup>1</sup> Warfield is not labelling the human "Divine" and so betraying himself into a form of Bibliolatry, but is rather insisting that in the Bible we have the speech of God albeit through human lips and pens.<sup>2</sup> This is not to ignore the fact that the human characteristics of the writers condition and qualify their literary products.<sup>3</sup> In point of fact, Warfield strongly insists that every word of Scripture, while a word of God, is in the truest sense a word of man.<sup>4</sup> For instance, he reminds us that the Word of God did not only come to the prophets but also from them, during which process all of the human faculties were alert.<sup>5</sup> The same God who providentially acted in history for the redemption of His people could, of course, prepare not only the subject matter but also the human agent who would, without violence to his own human nature, write precisely what was God's word to His people. "The Spirit is not to be conceived as standing outside of the human powers...but as working confluently in, with and by them..."<sup>6</sup> Undoubtedly, a definite doctrine of providence underlies Warfield's thinking at this point.<sup>7</sup>

An analogy drawn from the Divine-human personality of Christ may be applied to the Scriptures in a remote sense, though Warfield warns that it may easily

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, p. 71; Cf. pp. 52, 59, 396, 25, 33.

(2) Ibid., pp. 9, 71.

(3) Ibid., pp. 101f.

(4) Ibid., pp. 398, 102, 16.

(5) Ibid., p. 22.

(6) Ibid., p. 27. This is especially true in the case of those portions of the Bible which Warfield classes as the result of the "concurative" method of revelation i.e., most of the New Testament and in the Old Testament especially the historical sections. Cf. pp. 14-15.

(7) Ibid., pp. 102-104, 22. N.B., T.F. Torrance in his review of Warfield's The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible in "The Scottish Journal of Theology," vol. VII, no. 1, pp. 104-108, is quite correct in seeing the vital role which the doctrine of providence plays in Warfield's view of inspiration. "It is clear that the whole doctrine of revelation and inspiration is bound up with a philosophical doctrine of predestination..." (p.106).



be pushed too far, since "there is no hypostatic union between the Divine and the human in Scripture," "we cannot parallel the 'inscripturation' of the Holy Spirit and the incarnation of the Son of God."<sup>1</sup> The legitimate analogy consists in the fact

"that as, in the case of Our Lord's person, the human nature remains truly human while yet it can never fall into sin or error because it can never act out of relation with the Divine nature into conjunction with which it has been brought; so in the case of the production of Scripture by the conjoint action of human and Divine factors, the human factors have acted as human factors, and have left their mark on the product as such, and yet cannot have fallen into that error which we say it is human to fall into, because they have not acted apart from the Divine factors by themselves, but only under their unerring guidance."<sup>2</sup>

We must make no attempt to separate the human from the Divine side of Scripture lest we run into the folly of attempting to draw a rational line between thoughts and words,<sup>3</sup> or the equally foolish position of supposing "that the mere grammatical forms separately considered are inspired."<sup>4</sup> The claim of verbal inspiration "concerns words in their ordered sequence - in their living flow in the sentences."<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, verbal inspiration cannot be negated by arguments drawn from the primary sense of phrases or idioms, such as the setting of the sun, or the Roman world being called the whole world.<sup>6</sup>

"They (the Scriptures) are written in human languages, whose words, inflections, constructions and idioms bear everywhere indelible traces of human error. The record itself furnishes evidence that the writers were in a large measure dependent for their knowledge upon sources and methods in themselves fallible, and that their personal knowledge and judgment were in many matters hesitating and defective or even wrong.

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, p.108.

(2) Ibid., pp.108-109.

(3) Tractate "Inspiration", p.37; Revelation and Inspiration, p.401.

(4) Revelation and Inspiration, p.403.

(5) Ibid., p.403; Cf. Calvin and Calvinism, p.71 where Warfield maintains that the problem of accrediting Scripture and of assimilation of its revelatory contents are at the bottom one.

(6) Revelation and Inspiration, p.419.

Nevertheless, the historical faith of the Church<sup>1</sup> has always been that all the affirmations of Scripture of all kinds, whether of spiritual doctrine or duty, or of physical or historical fact, or of psychological or philosophical principle, are without error when the ipsissima verba of the original autographs are ascertained and interpreted in their natural and intended sense."<sup>2</sup>

This last phrase, "their natural and intended sense," discloses the method by which Warfield avoided the absurdities of extreme fundamentalism. The genealogies given in Scripture, for instance, were not intended for the purpose of constructing a chronology but rather for tracing lineage;<sup>3</sup> nor were the creation narratives intended to teach science.<sup>4</sup> When a writer does not profess to be quoting the Old Testament verbatim, then no objection can be raised when he does not do so.<sup>5</sup>

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This view of the inspiration of the Bible, Warfield believed to be in essential agreement with that held by Calvin.<sup>6</sup> In this respect we believe

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(1) Warfield thought of plenary verbal inspiration as the "church-doctrine," of Revelation and Inspiration, pp.52-59, but we feel that a critical investigation of his arguments on this aspect of the topic would take us unnecessarily afield.

(2) "Inspiration," p.40.

(3) Studies in Theology, p.241.

(4) "Princeton Theology Review", vol.XIX, p.154.

(5) Revelation and Inspiration, p.240.

(6) Warfield's exposition of his own view (Revelation and Inspiration) and of Calvin's view (Calvin and Calvinism, pp.48-70) contain no points of disagreement. Dowe says "There is no hint anywhere in Calvin's writings that the original text [of Scripture] contained any flaws at all. Op.cit., p.100. Calvin recognizes mistakes in the Scripture but they are blunders of copyists or, at the most, "accommodations" by the Holy Spirit; never are they inadvertencies. Cf. Dowe, op.cit., pp.103-105. A passage from Calvin which seems most explicitly to confirm the position of Dowe and Warfield, though cited by neither is found in Inst. III,xvii,13. In working out a harmony between the writings of James and Paul on Abraham's justification by faith, Calvin lists several possibilities one of which being that James may have made a mistake and "improperly inverted the order of events." He immediately adds in parenthesis, however, "which is unlawful to imagine."

him to be correct, though the matter of the accrediting of Scripture is another issue. To Calvin, the Biblical writers are the organs<sup>1</sup> or authentic amanuenses<sup>2</sup> of the Holy Spirit. Their mouths are "the mouth of the only true God."<sup>3</sup> When we turn to the Scripture we may say, "Now let us hear God Himself speaking in His own words,"<sup>4</sup> or "The Spirit asserts."<sup>5</sup> "For our wisdom ought to consist in embracing with gentle docility, and without any exception, all that is delivered in the sacred Scriptures,"<sup>6</sup> giving "to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God; because it has proceeded from Him alone, and has nothing belonging to man mixed with it."<sup>7</sup>

From Calvin's use of the expression "dictation,"<sup>8</sup> we might be led to think, on the surface of it, that Warfield has allowed more recognition to the human side of Scripture than did Calvin. Dowe, who himself disagrees with Calvin's view is nevertheless of the opinion that Warfield, among all the conflicting authorities, presents the best formulation for doing justice to Calvin himself.<sup>9</sup> Concerning dictation Warfield concluded:

"It is not unfair to urge, however, that this language is figurative; and that what Calvin has in mind is not to insist that the mode of inspiration was dictation, but that the result of inspiration is as if it were by dictation, viz., the production of a pure word of God free from all human admixtures."<sup>10</sup>

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(1) Comm. II Tim. 3:16.

(2) Inst. IV, viii, 9.

(3) Comm. I Peter 1:25.

(4) Inst. II, viii, 12.

(5) Inst. III, xvii, 11; cf. I, xvii, 2.

(6) Inst. I, xviii, 4.

(7) Comm. II Tim. 3:16.

(8) Inst. IV, viii, 6; I, xviii, 3; Comm. II Tim. 5:16; John, "The Argument."

(9) Dowe, *op.cit.*, p.101. Doumergue, Clavier, Fannier, and Heppe decline to attribute a dictation notion of inspiration to Calvin while R. Seeberg, O. Ritschl and A.M. Hunter do so. P. Lobstein and P. Brunner assent to the identification of Scripture and the word of God in Calvin. To this list of scholars given might be added R.E. Davies, The Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformers; H. Hauke, Die Problem der Theologie Calvins; and J. Mackinnon, Calvin and the Reformation all of whom are in essential agreement with Lobstein and Brunner.

(10) Calvinism and Calvinism, p.63, as cited by Dowe, *op.cit.*, p.101.



## THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Testimony of the Holy Spirit Warfield conceives of solely in the terms of the noetic side of regeneration.<sup>1</sup> God has accommodated His revelation for the reception by man in both nature and Scripture, though as we have noted, there is no soteriological revelation in nature. Since the failure of revelation, in any case, to produce true knowledge of God in man's heart is due not to any fault in the revelation itself but rather to man's sin-bred blindness, the testimony of the Spirit, accordingly, consists in a recreative action on the human heart and mind by which a new power is given to respond to the truth, sufficient in itself.<sup>2</sup> It might be mentioned also that the ground in equity upon which this recreative action is accomplished is the work of Christ, so that the atonement lies at the base of Warfield's doctrine of the knowledge of God.<sup>3</sup> This, in brief, is the doctrine of the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

It will be perceived that according to this doctrine faith is a thoroughly rational function. A certain difficulty attends it however, for as Warfield himself acknowledges, the work of the Holy Spirit in man is never complete or absolute in this life,<sup>4</sup> and thus man is never absolutely "normal" in the sense of being free from all effects of sin. We believe that Warfield must be criticized here, at least from the standpoint of Calvin, for oversimplifying - or shall we say rationalizing? - the doctrine of the testimony of the Holy

(1) Calvin and Calvinism, p.102f.

(2) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.143; Perfectionism, vol.II, p.436; Calvin and Calvinism, p.105; Studies in Theology, p.335.

(3) Ibid., pp.333,337; "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.144.

(4) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.145; Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, pp.154,160; Faith and Life, p.447; Perfectionism, vol.II, pp.59,444,583; Perfectionism, vol.I, pp.341,363,88,100; and indeed throughout the latter named works.



Spirit. In Inst. I,vii especially para.4, Calvin seems to have in mind by speaking of the Spirit as a "seal" something in the nature of a positive witness, a witness that can scarcely be described merely in terms of the noetic side of regeneration, although inseparable from it.<sup>1</sup> While we have no intention of denying that faith, properly understood, is a rational function, we will take occasion in examining further Warfield's use of the doctrine of the testimony of the Holy Spirit to point out how this improper rationalism enters in.

It will be noted, for instance, that in the Institutes Calvin has already completed his argument for the validity of Scripture in I, vii, before he turns to the "secondary helps"<sup>2</sup> of I,viii. But Warfield represents these indicia as being the means through which one is brought into proper confidence in the divinity of Scripture.<sup>3</sup> He acknowledges that Calvin does not teach this in so many words,<sup>4</sup> but insists nevertheless on the basis of general implications upon accrediting Calvin as "thinking of the newly implanted spiritual sense discerning the divinity of Scripture only through the mediation of the indicia of divinity manifested in Scripture."<sup>5</sup> This, it would seem, is to elevate the "secondary aids" to the level of importance of the text of Scripture itself.

Concerning Calvin's determination of the canon, Warfield wrote, "It was, in a word, on the ground of a purely scientific investigation that Calvin

(1) Else how could Calvin say that, "the testimony of the Spirit is superior to all reason?" Inst. I,vii,4.

(2) The Allen translation of the Institutes, from which we make our quotations in this paper, unfortunately entitles chapter viii "Rational Proofs to Establish the Belief of the Scripture." The Beveridge translation (1845) has it much more accurately headed "The Credibility of Scripture Sufficiently Proved, in so far as Reason Admits."

(3) Calvin and Calvinism, p.87.

(4) Ibid., p.88.

(5) Ibid., p.90.

accredited to himself the canon."<sup>1</sup> The testimony of the Spirit was appealed to only to accredit the divine origin of the concrete volume thus put into his hands.<sup>2</sup> This is undoubtedly Warfield's own view<sup>3</sup> but whether it is that of Calvin is extremely doubtful. In speaking of the authenticity of the book of Hebrews, Calvin lists among the reasons for receiving it the fact that "no book in the Holy Scriptures ... speaks so clearly of the priesthood of Christ, so highly exalts the virtue and dignity of that only true sacrifice which he offered by his death," etc.<sup>4</sup> A similar argument is made in reference to the book of James.<sup>5</sup> This would certainly show that Calvin did not distinguish so sharply between the settlement of canonicity on scientific grounds and the accrediting of the divine origin of Scripture by the testimony of the Spirit.

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Warfield held that in the internal testimony the Holy Spirit does not give to an individual an immediate revelation, nor does it produce an irrational or blind conviction apart from sufficient reason, but rather a grounded conviction.<sup>6</sup> From this point of view it is easy to understand his high estimate of apologetics, for "the presence to the mind of the 'grounds' of faith is just as essential as the creative operation of the Giver of faith itself."<sup>7</sup> Indeed,

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(1) Calvin and Calvinism, p.57.

(2) Ibid., p.101.

(3) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, pp.408-418; cf. pp.451-456.

(4) Comm. Hebrews, "The Argument", (1st paragraph).

(5) Comm. James, "The Argument", (2nd paragraph). We do not intend to imply that Calvin held any fixed doctrine, such as justification by faith, which he held over the Scripture as a standard for canonicity. We merely wish to point out that Warfield has not correctly represented Calvin at this point.

(6) Calvin and Calvinism, p.79; Studies in Theology, p.15.

(7) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I. p.143.



even apart from that act of the Holy Spirit by which faith is produced, a faith of a sort - like that possessed by the devils - can be formed provided the proper rational arguments are present to the mind. There is certainly some value, argues Warfield, in producing such conviction by means of apologetics, for while this is not saving faith, - there is no fiducial aspect to it - saving faith without this "is useless and of little worth."<sup>1</sup>

The value of apologetics does not stop here; we are told that its function is "to investigate, explicate, and establish the grounds on which a theology - a science, or systematic knowledge of God - is possible."<sup>2</sup> These "grounds" are the three presuppositions which any science must make: (1) the reality of its subject-matter; (2) the capacity of the human mind to apprehend and rationalize this subject-matter; and (3) some medium of communication by which the subject-matter is brought before the mind and presented to it for apprehension.<sup>3</sup> To be more specific,

"Apologetical Theology prepares the way for all theology by establishing its necessary presuppositions without which no theology is possible - the existence and essential nature of God, the religious nature of man which enables him to receive a revelation from God, the possibility of a revelation and its actual realization in the Scriptures."<sup>4</sup>

The deepest necessity for the function of apologetics lies not in its use as an instrument of propaganda, but from the need of the believer to vindicate to his own reason in the form of scientific judgment the grounds on which his faith rests.<sup>5</sup> We cannot "take our standpoint in the Scriptures" until "after we have Scriptures, authenticated as such, to take our standpoint in."<sup>6</sup> And

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- (1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.144.
  - (2) Studies in Theology, p.4.
  - (3) Ibid., p.53.
  - (4) Ibid., p.64.
  - (5) Ibid., p.16.
  - (6) Ibid., p.14.



"we cannot raise the question whether God has given us an absolutely trustworthy record of the supernatural facts and teachings of Christianity, before we are assured that there are supernatural facts and teachings to be recorded."<sup>1</sup> If we did not follow this procedure, "theology would present the odd spectacle among the sciences of claiming a place among a series of systems of knowledge for an elaboration of pure assumptions."<sup>2</sup>

Here again we see that element of rationalism at work which Warfield has taken over from Charles Hodge and, through him, from the Protestant Scholastics. He need not have employed it at all for he had the solution in hand in his own doctrine of faith. He tells us, for instance, that while faith has its certitude, it is of a different sort from that which we attain in the field of mathematics. Apodeictic certainty cannot be demanded in relation to knowledge of God, for the realm of the unseen differs from the realm of mathematics.<sup>3</sup> He even offers this criticism of Augustine's pre-Christian search for such certitude, "His difficulty was that he wished to apply this signum mechanically to every sphere of truth alike, and could content himself with no other kind of certitude."<sup>4</sup> Warfield knows full well that a Christian must walk by faith and not by sight; and that a systematic theologian is preëminently a Christian in the deepest sense, "resting always on the bosom of his Redeemer;"<sup>5</sup> and that his theology should be wrought out in the same attitude one exhibits in prayer.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps it would be unkind to remind one of Warfield's nature that one does not rationalize while in prayer, nevertheless we must register our protest: it does not appear that the stand taken with reference to the character of theology and

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, p.67.

(2) Studies in Theology, p.16.

(3) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, pp.136-137, 149.

(4) Ibid., p.137.

(5) Studies in Theology, p.86.

(6) "Presbyterian and Reformed Review", vol.II, p.382.



theologians, so well expressed in the words quoted near the beginning of this chapter, has been allowed to condition without exception his epistemology. Granted that the arguments of apologetics are not entirely divorced from God's Word in Scripture, indeed many of them are drawn from the Scriptures, still they are, in the strictest sense, arguments about Scripture rather than Scriptural truth itself. As such, they should be given at best only the subsidiary role as we have pointed out is the case in Calvin's Institutes. While it is true that Calvin taught that whoever wishes to profit from the Scriptures should be convinced that God is their author,<sup>1</sup> Calvin also says that "the testimony of the Spirit is superior to all reason."<sup>2</sup> It would seem then that if the sword of the Spirit is the word of God (Eph. 6:17), the internal testimony is accomplished by the Spirit through the medium of the Word. Certainly the best way by which we might facilitate this testimony of the Holy Spirit is by the expounding of God's Word itself, as it is in Scripture.

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The root meaning of πίστις Warfield took to be that of "binding", and accordingly saw in the act of faith a "forced consent". "We 'have faith' in what compels our confidence."<sup>3</sup> It cannot be thought of as the arbitrary act of the subject for such would be the product of volition, looking to the future and representing our desires, while belief, faith looks to the present and represents our findings. No doubt it is true that a person may be prepared to act on the basis of a supposition which he recognizes does not have objectively valid evidence. But this fact does not militate against the notion of faith as

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- (1) Comm. II Tim. 3:16.
  - (2) Inst. I, vii, 4.
  - (3) Studies in Theology, p. 313.

a forced consent, argues Warfield, for after such a supposition has been acted upon with successful results, it gains thereby the additional evidence sufficient to establish its reality.<sup>1</sup>

Of course it does not follow that one's beliefs correspond with reality but they do correspond with what one thinks is real. In this sense, faith "does not follow the evidence itself ... but the judgment of the intellect on the evidence."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Warfield did not allow the Kantian distinction between faith as conviction founded on subjectively adequate evidence, and knowledge as conviction founded on objectively adequate evidence. From the standpoint of the subject there can be no distinctions such as subjectively and objectively adequate evidence. That the subject deems certain evidence to be objectively adequate is precisely what makes it subjectively adequate.<sup>3</sup> It is from this standpoint that Warfield speaks derisively of that viewpoint which would reduce the deity of Christ into the "God-for-us-ity of Christ."<sup>4</sup>

Neither can faith be thought of as resting on "some subjective interest or consideration of value," as over against knowledge which rests on evidence of "theoretic certitude."<sup>5</sup> This, however, is tantamount to saying that faith rests not on evidence but on what one would wish were true. Men, on the contrary, do not have faith in what they wish were true but in that which they are convinced is true. To maintain that faith rests on a volition, on consideration of value rather than reality, or on evidence only subjectively but not objectively adequate is to sublimate it respectively into a wish or a will, a conjectural hypothesis or a mistake.<sup>6</sup>

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(1) Studies in Theology, pp.315-316.

(2) Ibid., p.318.

(3) Ibid., p.319.

(4) Perfectionism, vol.I. p.38.

(5) The position of A.T.Ormond in Baldwin's Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology, vol.I, p.369; cf. Studies in Theology, p.321.

(6) Studies in Theology, p.325.

Faith is a specific form of persuasion or conviction and like all persuasion and conviction it is grounded in evidence.<sup>1</sup> It is not to be placed in opposition to knowledge; on the contrary, knowledge comprises a necessary element in faith.<sup>2</sup> Faith, while it includes the elements of notitia and assensus, differs from what we usually term knowledge in the matter of its object. The object of faith is God, or more specifically the God who was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.<sup>3</sup> The Truth of God is, of course, not excogitable or immediately demonstrable by natural reason. It must be told to us. Thus we are not being irrational, but thoroughly rational in making an appeal to authority. Warfield defends Augustine at this point from the charge of being an irrationalist.

"His appeal to authority was in his own mind not a desertion of reason but an advance towards reason. He sought truth through authority only because it became clear to him that this was the rational road to truth. It was thus not as an irrationalist, but as a rationalist, that he made his appeal to authority."<sup>4</sup>

Faith is by no means blind: it has eyes of its own with which it must needs see both that to which it assents and that on the ground of which it assents to it. "No one believes anything unless he has before thought it worthy of belief."<sup>5</sup> "Surely we believe in Christ because it is rational to believe in Him, not though it be irrational."<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps everyone would agree with these statements, but Warfield goes further and allows that improper rationalism we have already mentioned to creep in in the form of an apologetic which resembles Thomism more than

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(1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.142.

(2) Studies in Theology, p.341; The Right of Systematic Theology, p.68 and throughout.

(3) Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, vol.I, p.837.

(4) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p.164.

(5) Augustine, "De praedest. sanotl." II,5, quoted by Warfield in Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p.171.

(6) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.143.



Calvinism. Certainly Warfield appears to allow validity to some rational arguments to serve in a preparatory way for faith. He speaks of the "conviction of the truth of the Christian religion" as "the logical prius of self-commitment to the Founder of that religion."<sup>1</sup> Though he acknowledges that Augustine is correct -- we believe that we may know, -- not, know that we may believe -- he can still speak after this manner:

"If it can be established that God, condescending to our weakness, has given us a revelation, then, undoubtedly, that revelation becomes an adequate authority upon which our faith may securely rest."<sup>2</sup>

The question is, how is that first "if" to be removed? It seems that we, having been released from the shackles of sin by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, yield to the arguments which in themselves are more than adequate to convince. This would amount, as far as we can see, to the necessity of giving cogency to arguments about Scripture before we actually engage ourselves in assimilating its contents, and deeming Christ worthy of trust before we are actually confronted by Him.

If we are correct in perceiving an element of scholasticism here, it is only fair to go on and point out that it by no means dominates the whole of Warfield's epistemology. Indeed much of the sting of our charge is softened when we see the strong emphasis which is placed on the personal aspect of faith. We are told in his summary of the Biblical doctrines of faith that

"faith has ever terminated with trustful reliance, not on the promise but on the Promiser, -- not on the propositions which declare God's grace and willingness to save, or Christ's divine nature and power, or the reality and perfection of His saving work, but on the Saviour upon whom, because of these facts, it could securely rest as One able to save to the uttermost. Jesus Christ, God the Redeemer, is accordingly the object of saving

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(1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.142.

(2) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p.173.



faith, presented to its embrace at first implicitly and in promise, and ever more and more openly until at last it is entirely explicit and we read that 'a man is not justified save through faith in Jesus Christ' (Gal.2:16)."<sup>1</sup>

The object of faith is a person, then, rather than a proposition. This demands as its correlate that the element of trust, fiducia, be prominent in contradistinction to the elements of notitia and assensus.<sup>2</sup> There is no conflict here, however, for "the movement of the sensibilities which we call 'trust', is the product of the assensus "which in turn is preceded by the notitia."<sup>3</sup> This does not mean that we are to be betrayed back into an even more thoroughgoing scholasticism. A man does not have to become a learned apologist before he can become a Christian<sup>4</sup> though it is true he yields faith only on the grounds of evidence which he deems objectively valid.<sup>5</sup> This evidence is not necessarily present to his mind in an analytical or logically formed manner, for after all, personal relationships are not so treated by us.<sup>6</sup> Warfield cites as an illustration the case of a man who recognizes in a piece of writing the handwriting of a friend. He cannot give you an analysis in formal logic why he does so. This is not because there do not exist valid proofs but because he is not able to isolate them. So, for instance, "if we are assured of the deity of Christ, it will be on adequate grounds, appealing to the reason. But it may well be on grounds not analysed,

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.503; cf. The Saviour of the World, p.184f; Perfectionism, vol.II, p.519; "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.674; Studies in Theology, p.331; Perfectionism, vol.I, p.23.

(2) Studies in Theology, p.331.

(3) Ibid., p.342.

(4) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, pp.143,146; Revelation and Inspiration, pp.67ff,171.

(5) Studies in Theology, p.315.

(6) "Fundamentals", vol.I, p.22.

perhaps not analysable."<sup>1</sup>

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While maintaining this emphasis on the personal element of faith, Warfield held the plenary inspiration of the Bible to be of basic importance in attaining a certain and sure knowledge of Christ. He repeatedly asserts, however, that Christianity does not rest on the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration, nor is this doctrine to be considered the most fundamental of Christian doctrines.<sup>2</sup> Christianity rests on the fact of God's supernatural revelation. But the Bible constitutes a thoroughly trustworthy record of that revelation and as such, becomes, in the hand of the ordinary Christian man, the means by which his prepared heart can receive a knowledge of Christ his Saviour. If this trustworthy record were not present, faith could only be the product of a thorough historical investigation and there would certainly be few who would be able to trust their all to Christ with entire security.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, the merely historical vindication of Christianity could never supply a firm basis of trust for all the details of teaching and all the items of promise upon which the Christian man would fain lean. The church could no longer have "unsullied assurance in the details of its teaching."<sup>4</sup> But what is even worse, if plenary inspiration is rejected our confidence in the truth of the revelation itself is shaken since Christ and His apostles taught this doctrine themselves.<sup>5</sup> If the New Testament writers are thus deemed not trustworthy as teachers of doctrine we shall have to go elsewhere for the norm of

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(1) Op.cit., p.22.

(2) Revelation and Inspiration, pp.67, 209-211.

(3) Ibid., pp.68,171.

(4) Ibid., p.68.

(5) Ibid., pp.195,69.

truth as to God: it will not be strange if a very different system of doctrine from that delivered by the Scriptures, results.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible was for Professor Warfield not an abstract principle nor an end in itself, but rather constituted the only sound basis for even attempting to be exegetical in theology or in preaching.<sup>2</sup> It was certainly odd, he thought, to make final appeals to the Bible in order to support one's theology if it be held that the Bible is not altogether trustworthy.<sup>3</sup> All his insistence then on plenary verbal inspiration was in order to establish "a justification of the detailed use of the Bible text for the ascertainment of Christian doctrine."<sup>4</sup>

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, p.180

(2) Studies in Theology, p.465; Calvin and Calvinism, p.71.

(3) The reference is to James Denney. Cf. Critical Reviews., p.105.

(4) Opuscula, VI, p.69.

# THE MAN OF FAITH AS SUBJECT IN KNOWING

When man fell, the relation in which he stood to God was fundamentally altered; not as if he ceased to be entirely dependent on God, nor as if he ceased to be conscious of this dependence. Even as a sinner he cannot escape the knowledge of it.<sup>1</sup> But his consciousness of dependence on God can no longer take the "form" of glad and loving trust since precisely what sin has done is to destroy the ground for such trust. In this new relation to God — that of a sinner to his Judge — man can think of God only in terms of judgment and punishment. So trust is transformed into distrust; faith into unfaith. "Knowing himself to be dependent on God he seeks to be as independent of Him as he can."<sup>2</sup>

The reestablishment of faith and trust as the "form" of man's feeling of dependence upon God can result only from a radical change in the relation of the sinner to God. This the sinner is powerless to effect; it must be done by God alone in the atoning work of Christ. After this manner the guilt by which the sinner is kept under the wrath of God is cancelled. The knowledge of this fact is then brought home to his mind by a recreative work of the Holy Spirit so that faith and trust are once again restored. This faith, though it bears a different character from that of the unfallen man — viz., it is now soteriological — remains essentially the same thing as in unfallen man. And, therefore,

"though in renewed man, it is a gift of God's grace, it does not come to him as something alien to his nature. It is beyond the powers of his nature as sinful man; but it is something which belongs to human nature as such, which has been lost through sin and which can be restored only by the power of God."<sup>3</sup>

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(1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.144.

(2) Studies in Theology, p.339.

(3) Ibid., p.340; NB. The preceding two paragraphs are a summary of two very similar passages by Warfield, "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.144; and Studies in Theology, pp.339f.



The man of faith is not thereby to consider himself ontologically different from the man under sin in the sense of being a different kind of being, "gradus non mutant specie".<sup>1</sup> There have not been put within him any new faculties, but only a measurable restoration of his old ones.<sup>2</sup> In the realm of natural science, then, he should not withdraw himself from the man in sin in an effort to produce a science different in kind, but should work alongside him urging again and again his principles against those of the unregenerate. Through the gift of God he is a man of stronger and purer thought and by pressing this advantage he will serve, "if not obviously his own generation, yet truly all the generations of men."<sup>3</sup>

In the field of theology, the science of God, he is not to withdraw either, but rather to contend vigorously from the standpoint of that knowledge which he receives by the Word and the Spirit. He should not think that he cannot prove his position, nor that the arguments he urges are not sufficient to validate the Christian religion, nor even that the mind of sinful man is inaccessible to them.<sup>4</sup>

Having said this, Warfield goes on to deny that the man of faith can be supposed in his spiritual wisdom to act as a guide to lead the unregenerate man -- who can possess nought but the wisdom of the flesh -- to God. Even though the arguments of the Christian apologist appear cogent to the unregenerate man he will remain of the same opinion.<sup>5</sup> He will be as one who though seeing, sees not. Apologetics will of itself never make a Christian, but

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(1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.145.

(2) Studies in Theology, p.339.

(3) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.146.

(4) Ibid., p.146.

(5) Ibid., p.146; Studies in Theology, p.16.

then, adds Warfield, neither can the proclaimed gospel do that.<sup>1</sup> The recreating activity of the Holy Spirit must be present, for without it even the word of Scripture will lie before us "inert and without effect on our hearts and minds."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless the arguments and issues which the man of faith presses upon his unbelieving fellowman are of considerable value. Indeed Warfield expects entirely too much from this arguing. For instance in his short article, "God,"<sup>3</sup> he says that the nature of God has been made known to men in three stages; (1) as the Infinite Spirit, (2) as the Redeemer of sinners - here special revelation is brought in - and (3) as the triune, God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It is clear from the validity allowed in this discussion to the "theistic proofs" and the analogy of being - "the principle of interpreting by the highest category within our reach, by our instinctive attribution to Him, in an eminent degree, of all that is the source of dignity and excellence in ourselves"<sup>4</sup> - that Dowey is justified in criticizing Warfield for giving "the positive evaluations of the revelation in creation" a preliminary and preparatory rôle to God's redemptive work in Christ.<sup>5</sup>

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(1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. I, p. 146; Studies in Theology, p. 341. Cf. Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, pp. 168, 171f.

(2) Calvin and Calvinism, p. 115.

(3) Studies in Theology, pp. 109-114. First published 1898.

(4) Ibid., p. 111.

(5) Dowey, op. cit., p. 138. Dowey utilizes an analogy of grace to harmonize Calvin's positive evaluation of the revelation in creation to the man of faith on the one hand with his rash statements condemning the wisdom of the world on the other. "Calvin condemns absolutely all men's efforts to know God outside Christ and yet subsequently urges them in faith to look upon the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator in Creation ..." (p. 138). A parallel is seen in his teaching of grace and works. "He condemns good works as a ground of merit or a basis of salvation, then reintroduces them in equally vigorous criticism of the antinomians" (p. 137). We are not making our criticism of Warfield directly from Calvin at this point for even to determine exactly what Calvin's teaching was would take us too far afield. Suffice it to say that if Dowey has correctly represented Calvin, Warfield should be criticized along lines which we have attempted in this chapter.

In Warfield's favour, however, a fact of singular importance, pointed out earlier in this chapter, must be kept in mind. Despite the approval which he explicitly gives to the validity of the "theistic proofs" concerning God, and to an epistemology which, in short, allows a certain natural theology to the man of faith<sup>1</sup> — albeit not really apart from special revelation; the "spectacles" are needed in order to see the wisdom and majesty of God in creation<sup>2</sup> — there is not a single example in all of his extant writings of his actually engaging in this sort of natural theology himself. It is true he argues, urging his own position against such a philosophy as that of thoroughgoing evolution,<sup>3</sup> but he never produced anything resembling the old scholastic proofs for the existence of God. Even if we grant that in all likelihood he held the work of Charles Hodge and A.A. Hodge in this field to be of the highest order, we cannot escape the significance of the fact that his writings are composed almost entirely of works on exegetical and historical theology, and sermons, all of which are expository. It is in these Biblical works that Warfield gives us the most fruitful conceptions as to the function the man of faith is under obligation to perform in this world of sin. To the student body of Princeton he said,

"Preach a full-orbed, a complete Gospel." "The deposit (commenting on I Tim. 6:20, 21) is not your product to be treated as you will; it is the creation of another placed in your keeping. You are but its witnesses." "The glory of the world of intellect itself fades like that of the face of Moses, like that of the old covenant in the presence of the new, — by reason only of the glory that surpasses all — the glory of that glorious Gospel of the grace of God. It is, in a word, the inherent preciousness of the Gospel, not the inherent valuelessness of knowledge, that makes all knowledge in contrast with it, but foolishness — but a mass of profane inanities and self-contradictions which should not be permitted to intrude into these sacred precincts."<sup>4</sup>

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(1) Resembling, in the main, that of Charles Hodge in Systematic Theology, vol. I.

(2) Calvin's term utilized by Warfield, Calvin and Calvinism, pp. 68-70

(3) Critical Reviews, pp. 178-197.

(4) Faith and Life, pp. 391f.

In these addresses to the students of Princeton Seminary<sup>1</sup> the emphasis is not placed upon any obligation the preacher might be under to argue with the men of the world about God or to enter into discussions with them on the plane of natural theology, but rather on the fact that theirs is not the task of teaching men what they already know or even of saying to them the most plausible things that can be thought of. They are to proclaim a gospel which before the proud intellect of the world is unpalatable, mysterious and foolish.<sup>2</sup>

This does not mean that they are to oppose or denounce per se natural theology and the religion based upon it. Christianity did not come into the world merely to sweep away all of the "props by which men were wont to support their trembling, guilt-stricken souls" and "to throw them back on their own strong right arms to conquer a standing before God."<sup>3</sup> It proclaims what God has done in order to supersede all the poor fumbling efforts which men were making for themselves.

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(1) Published under the title, Faith and Life.

(2) Faith and Life, p.242.

(3) Biblical Doctrines, p.435.



## CHAPTER THREE

## THE TWO NATURES OF CHRIST

One of the most lamentable aspects of the theological thinking of his day, was, to Warfield, the widespread rejection of the Christological formulation of Chalcedon. "The doctrine of the Two Natures," he wrote, "is only another way of stating the doctrine of the Incarnation; and the doctrine of the Incarnation is the hinge on which the Christian system turns. No Two Natures, no Incarnation; no Incarnation, no Christianity in any distinctive sense."<sup>1</sup> From such a view-point it is easy to see the consternation aroused in Warfield's mind by a situation, as Friedrich Loofs phrased it in 1913, in which -

"all learned Protestant theologians of Germany, even if they do not do so with the same emphasis, readily admit unanimously that the orthodox Christology does not do sufficient justice to the truly human life of Jesus and that the orthodox doctrine of the two natures in Christ cannot be retained in its traditional form. All our systematic theologians, so far as they see more in Jesus than the first subject of Christian faith, are seeking new paths for their Christology."<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting that Warfield, in nearly all of his polemic writings on Christology, makes the issue come to focus, not so much in the matter of acknowledging the full deity of Christ, as that of recognizing the truthfulness of the doctrine of the Two Natures. The main body of the theologians of the 19th and early 20th centuries had done no wrong in seeing Jesus Christ as a real human being; their trouble was in too often seeing Him as merely a human being. And

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(1) Christology and Criticism, p. 259

(2) What Is the Truth about Jesus Christ?, p. 203.

though some attempt was made in nearly every instance to see in Him more than an ordinary man, the real trouble lay in their rejection of the doctrine of the Two Natures. With this rejection retained, there is room in one's Christology for only one nature of course, and since the human was affirmed, the result was a purely human Jesus.<sup>1</sup> As long as this rejection remained firmly entrenched, a pure argument for the deity of Christ would avail little, for if one were to accept it, while still rejecting the Chalcedonian formulation, his only recourse would be to become a docetic heretic. Indeed Warfield puts many of his twentieth century contemporaries in a category with the Docetists, Ebionites, and Dynamistic Montanists, all having the one characteristic - namely, rejection of the two-natured Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Thus Warfield's arguments, both theological and exegetical, are directed primarily toward just the establishment of the "fact of Jesus", "the historical Christ" who was true man and very God, one Person in two distinct natures "without confusion, without conversion, eternally, and inseparably."<sup>3</sup> We shall refrain from the temptation to make the very neat division of his material into some such categories as 'Manhood of Christ' and 'Deity of Christ' but shall present these aspects of his Christology as he did, side by side. Warfield believed that they were so presented in Scripture and considered the fact quite important.

There was nothing new decreed at Chalcedon. The doctrine of the

(1) Christology and Criticism, pp. 287, 303-304, 374.

(2) Ibid., p. 373; cf. pp. 261 ff.

(3) From the Creed of Chalcedon as quoted by Warfield, Christology and Criticism, p. 264.

Two Natures had been fully formulated in the West from at least the time of Tertullian, nor did any of the disputants in the long series of controversies which led up to Chalcedon cherish any doubt of it -- not even Arius, and certainly not Apollinarius, or Nestorius, or Eutyches, or any of the great Monophysite or Monothelite leaders, or any of their opponents."<sup>1</sup> The term δύο οὐσίαι first occurs in the writings of Melito of Sardis but the notion itself Warfield sees much earlier in the writings of Clement of Rome and Ignatius.

The fundamental argument, however, is seen in the fact that the doctrine "is entrenched in the teaching of the New Testament." Over and over again Warfield speaks of the doctrine of Chalcedon in a quasi-scientific manner as though it were similar to a law in natural science, a law the expression of which is demanded by observable phenomena. The phenomena are simply the accounts which comprise the portrait of Jesus to be found in the Bible, not only in the Gospels but also in the didactic portions of the epistolary literature,<sup>2</sup> and the only view of Jesus which keeps this mass of details from being transmuted into a mere set of crass contradictions is the view set forth at Chalcedon. It is the key that fits a very complicated lock and thus, "can scarcely fail to be the true key."<sup>3</sup> "It is only as we carry this conception of the person of Our Lord with us -- the conception of Him as Supreme Lord, to whom our adoration is due, and our fellow in the experiences of human life -- that unity is induced in the multifarious allusions to him throughout..."<sup>4</sup>

(1) Christology and Criticism, p. 261. Apparently what Warfield intends here is that they all believed in a Divine-human Christ.

(2) Warfield held that the Old Testament had its contribution too, but this was seen as interpreted by the New Testament writers. Cf. "The Divine Messiah in Old Testament" in Christology and Criticism, pp. 3-49.

(3) Biblical Doctrines, p. 207; Christology and Criticism, p. 265.

(4) Biblical Doctrines, p. 189.

Not to admit the doctrine of the Two Natures is to "deny to the Apostolic writers the synthesis which is essential to give harmony to their thought..."<sup>1</sup>

In relation to the New Testament, the doctrine of Chalcedon is more than a mere mathematical formula which solves a complicated problem; for, while not formally enunciated in so many words, it is nevertheless effectively taught by the New Testament writers. Warfield nowhere says that the New Testament writers had in their minds a carefully thought out doctrine such as the Chalcedonian, but that their view of Christ was precisely the same as that which promoted the formulation of the Chalcedonian creed and that moreover, they taught this view in an indirect way. Much of their writing is done with the obvious presupposition of the two-natured Christ in mind and "surely there is no more effective way of teaching doctrines than always to speak on their presupposition, and in a manner which is confusing and apparently self-contradictory, except they be presupposed."<sup>2</sup>

The actual creed of Chalcedon is not, however,

"the product of a single mind working under a 'scientific' impulse, that is to say, with purely theoretical intent, but of the mind, or rather, the heart, of the church at large searching for an adequate formulation of its vital faith, that is to say, of a large body of earnest men distributed through a long stretch of time, and living under very varied conditions, each passionately asserting and seeking to have justice accorded to, elements of the biblical representation which particularly 'found' him. The final statement is not a product of the study, therefore, but of life..."<sup>3</sup>

The controversies were the fires which burned out the chaff of error

- (1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. XV, p. 150.
- (2) The Lord of Glory, p. 172.
- (3) Christology and Criticism, p. 264.



so that the resulting statement is not a compromise but a synthesis, a work "done for all time." By this Warfield did not mean to say that there remained nothing to be said on the subject of Christology after Chalcedon except by way of defense of it. Though he does speak of the doctrine as a "solvent of difficulties" and a "solution of enigmas",<sup>1</sup> this is (in loc.) a reference to His Life manifestation or the "phenomena" concerning Him which we are given in the Scriptures. This is the one doctrine which enables a reader of the biblical testimony to Jesus Christ to take up every declaration he meets into "an intelligently consistent conception of his Lord."<sup>2</sup> Warfield by no means implies that the very Person of the Christ was therefore subsumed by the intellect of the Chalcedonian doctors under their static categories of thought. ~~as much as to say, "At last we have Him cornered in our neat doctrine," like a fish is trapped in a net.~~ The statement of Chalcedon is a true statement of the incarnation and so being, it is just as much a mystery to thought as the Incarnation itself. In this sense it "solves" nothing but merely highlights or systematizes the problem which in the end of the day must remain forever unsolved by mortal men.

"The conjunction of a human nature with a divine nature in one conscious and personal subject no doubt presents an insoluble problem to thought. But this is just the mystery of Incarnation, without which there is no Incarnation;"<sup>3</sup> for if "He was both God and man, in two distinct natures united, however inseparably and eternally, yet without conversion or confusion in one person -

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- (1) Christology and Criticism, p. 310.
  - (2) Ibid., p. 265.
  - (3) Critical Reviews, p. 314-315.

we have in His person, no doubt, an inexhaustible mystery, the mystery surpassing all mysteries, of combined divine love and human devotion.<sup>1</sup>

All other representations of Jesus, those of the Jesus of History school, the Kenotic, Divine Immanence, Adoptionist, etc., are but evasions of this mystery and inevitably result in each man creating for himself an artificial Jesus reduced in the traits allowed to Him to more credible consistency.

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(1) Christology and Criticism, p. 306

## SCRIPTURAL TESTIMONY

As has been stated, Warfield considered the Chalcedonian doctrine of the Person of Christ to be more than just an hypothesis which does justice to the Scriptural testimony; it is the actual assertion of all the primary witnesses of the Christian faith including our Lord Himself. Moreover, the apparently divergent data concerning the Person of Christ are pretty evenly distributed throughout the New Testament so that rather than finding testimony to His deity in one place and to His humanity in another, we find them side by side in the same author and even in the same writing.<sup>1</sup> There is, then, in the New Testament no development of Christology from human to divine, no pre-Pauline, Pauline, post-Pauline Christologies, but rather one <sup>Christology</sup> ~~Christ~~ to which the whole gives accurate and harmonious witness. We turn now to some examples of Warfield's exegesis which illustrate his Christology much more precisely than does a bare statement of adherence to the creed of Chalcedon.

The New Testament writers unhesitatingly appeal to the Old Testament in order to establish the deity of Christ, so then to Warfield, with his view of the Scriptures, the Old Testament has its Christological testimony which may be directly adduced.<sup>2</sup> The Messianic Psalms quoted in Hebrews 1 (Psalm 45:6 for instance) show definitely that Israel had the hope of a Divine Messiah. There are two distinct lines of kingly expectation: (1) The coming of David's Son, and (2) The visitation of

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(1) Christology and Criticism, p. 267.

(2) "The Divine Messiah in the Old Testament" from Christology and Criticism, pp. 3-49

Jahve himself. These two lines are definitely correlates and the same threefold activity is ascribed to each, viz. (1) to destroy enemies, (2) to judge, and (3) to save.

The El Gibbor (גִּבּוֹר לַחַיִּים) of Isaiah 9:6 can only signify a Hero who is exalted above all human heroes by the circumstances that he is God. That El Gibbor is used in Isaiah 10:21 of Jehovah is quite an obstacle for any other interpretation.<sup>1</sup> "And who can doubt that, granting the subject of chapter 53 to be an individual, he must be the incarnation of the Divine?"<sup>2</sup>

The Son of Man in Daniel 7:13-14 is a superhuman figure "to whose superhuman character justice is not done until it is recognized as expressly divine."<sup>3</sup>

### The Synoptic Gospels

What is characteristic of the Synoptics is their "inextricable interlacing" of the human and Divine traits of Jesus. It is possible, by neglecting one series of their representations and attending only to the other, to sift out from them at will the portrait of either a purely divine or a purely human Jesus.<sup>4</sup> But if we surrender ourselves to their

(1) Following here E. W. Hengstenberg, "Christology," ii, p. 85; cf. Christology and Criticism, p. 31.

(2) T. K. Cheyne, The Prophecies of Isaiah, is quoted approvingly by Warfield, op. cit. p. 29. That Cheyne later deserted his position Warfield cited as an example of the "uncertainty of touch which characterizes the 'Liberal' criticism of this type."

(3) Warfield, op. cit. p. 46. Warfield's conclusion is based seemingly more on a dialectic treatment of the liberal comments than an exhaustive study of the passage itself. The net result of the liberal comments is that the Son of Man is either superhuman but not Messianic or Messianic but not superhuman. Warfield accepts their affirmations and rejects their denials.

(4) Warfield had accused P. W. Schmiedel of doing precisely this, and of labeling the human portrait the "primitive belief." Cf. "Concerning Schmiedel's Pillar-Passages," Christology and Criticism, pp. 181-255.



guidance it is impossible to derive from them the portrait of any other than a divine-human Jesus. "They present as real and as forcible a testimony to the constitution of Our Lord's person as uniting in one personal life a truly Divine and a truly human nature, as if they announced this fact in analytical statement."<sup>1</sup>

Mark, for instance, does not dwell on Christology as such. "It emerges in his narrative, almost, we may say, by accident." "His is not the Gospel of reflection; it is the Gospel of action."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless Jesus appears as a person endowed with spiritual powers, and more than this, as a supernatural person. There is no record, for example, of Jesus saying, "All authority is given to me in heaven and earth," there is simply the exhibition of the exercise of this authority. "Similarly he does not stop in his rapidly moving narrative to say, 'Lo, here is a supernatural person,' but he does give, almost by accident it seems, sufficient to show that he, Mark, is not ignorant of these things."<sup>3</sup>

The famous verse, Mark 13:32,<sup>4</sup> oft quoted in support of Christ's human limitations, is obviously spoken from a divine self-consciousness in which the Son is placed beyond the realm of the creatures. Mark understands Christ to be speaking here not "of what He once was, but of what at the moment of speaking He is."<sup>5</sup>

The use of Psalm 110 by Jesus in Mark 12:36 makes it hard to believe that our Lord intended - or was understood by Mark to intend - by such a

(1) Biblical Doctrines, p. 196.

(2) The Lord of Glory, p. 45.

(3) Ibid., p. 46.

(4) See section of Kenosis for précis of Warfield's exegesis of this verse treating the matter of limitation.

(5) Biblical Doctrines, p. 201

designation of the Messiah, to attribute to Himself "less than superman - or shall we say divine? - dignity by virtue of which He should be recognized as rightfully occupying the throne of God." "To be in this sense David's Lord falls little, if anything, short of being David's God."<sup>1</sup>

In Matthew, the reader is impressed with the profundity of the self-testimony of Jesus which comes to a climax in Matthew 11:27-28 in which "our Lord solemnly presents Himself to men as the exclusive source of all knowledge of God, and the exclusive channel of divine grace."<sup>2</sup> And His exclusive mediation of this saving knowledge He makes to rest upon "His unique relation to the Father, by virtue of which the Father and the Son, and all that is in the Father and the Son, lie mutually open to each other's gaze."<sup>3</sup> This passage too, is cast in the present tense representing not a past relation, but a continuous and unbroken one. This assertion of reciprocal knowledge of the Father and the Son rises far above the merely mediatorial function of the Son, although it underlies His mediatorial mission; it carries us back into the region of metaphysical relations. The Son, then, occupies more than an external relation of equality with the Father, He occupies also an internal relation of interpenetration. We shall discuss later what Warfield has to say on the subject of the humiliation of Christ,<sup>4</sup> but in the light of this exegesis we draw attention to the following distinction. Christ in His mediatorial office - for the fulfilment of which the assumption of human flesh was necessary - is quite inferior to God the

(1) The Lord of Glory, p. 42

(2) Ibid., p. 82.

(3) Ibid., p. 82.

(4) Cf. Warfield's exegesis of John 14:28 ("The Father is greater than I") in Kenosis chapter.

Father; but this very mediatorial function is rooted in a metaphysical relation in which is found no hint of subordination.<sup>1</sup>

In the baptismal formula (Matt. 28:18-20) Warfield sees a significant point in the fact that the passage reads, "in the name," and not, "names." The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are therefore in some ineffable sense one, sharers in the single Name. Jesus is seen here as not a mere delegate or representative nor even a superhuman or superangelic figure but an actually divine Person "possessed of divine prerogatives, active in divine power, and in multiform ways manifesting a divine nature."<sup>2</sup>

In the case of Luke, there is the impression that the evangelist is engrossed in the narrative aspects of his writing to an extent that represses much more testimony to the divine dignity of the Messiah than actually finds expression in his pages.

One of Warfield's favorite methods of adducing the Scriptural evidence for the two natures of Christ is to set down the allusions to His divine and human natures side by side in unrelieved contradistinction. Christ is the Lord of angels (Matt. 13:41; 24:31), yet identifies Himself with man (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4); the kingdom of God and the elect of God are His (Matt. 12:28; 19:24; 21:31,43; Mark 13:20; Luke 18:7), but nevertheless He is capable of experiencing the human dread of death (Luke 12:50); He is the Son of God in a unique sense (Mark 9:7; 1:11) the claim of which would be blasphemy on the part of any ordinary man (Mark 14:61,64), yet His physical body and parts He speaks of as being truly His (Matt. 26:12,28; Mark 14:8,22,24;

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(1) Warfield vigorously opposed Trinitarian subordinationism, viz. Rousset, J. Weiss, and Harnack, but taught a subordinationism (or humiliation as he preferred to call it) of the Son seen from a soteriological standpoint, that is, in the role which was His in man's redemption.

(2) The Lord of Glory, p. 86.

Luke 22:19,20; 24,39); He obviously speaks from a divine consciousness (Mark 13:32) setting Himself up as David's Lord at the right hand of God (Matt. 22:44) in separation from other men (in His use of 'My Father' as opposed to 'Our Father' which He taught His disciples to use and in the parabolic discrimination as Son and heir from all servants, Matt. 21:33ff), still He is one who could go through the soul-sorrowing experience of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:38; Mark 13:34). On the dialectic goes:<sup>1</sup> He claimed the Messiahship and accepted all Messianic designations, He claimed teaching authority surpassing all others known and assumed full authority of divinely established religious ordinances, He forgave sins, read men's hearts, claimed judgment of the quick and the dead, drew to Himself all religious affections, claiming men's destinies depended on their relation to Him, received the attribution of omnipotence (Matt. 24:30; Mark 14:62) and omnipresence (Matt. 18:20; 28:10),<sup>2</sup> all of which did not stop Him from feeling the dreadful desolation on the cross (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34). With these two aspects of the testimony before us

"we perceive Him alternately speaking out of a Divine and out of a human consciousness; manifesting Himself as all that God is and as all that man is; yet with the most marked unity of consciousness. He, the one Jesus Christ, was to His own apprehension true God and complete man in a unitary personal life."<sup>3</sup>

From the general Synoptic picture of Jesus the Stoic notion of the "apathetic" approach to life must be refuted. So far from possessing the

(1) Cf. Biblical Doctrines, pp. 175ff., also Christology and Criticism, pp. 162ff., and The Lord of Glory, pp. 122-132.

(2) Notice that no distinction is made between the pre- and post-resurrection attributions of Christ as far as the construction of a Christology is concerned.

(3) Biblical Doctrines, p. 206. Considerable amount of objection has been raised to the effect that if we picture Christ as speaking alternately out of a divine and human consciousness then it is sheer nonsense to speak of any 'marked unity of consciousness', viz. L. W. Grensted, "The unity of the Person must be of more significance than a verbal link between two sets of attributes" Person of Christ, p. 124. From Warfield's standpoint, however, this is but part of the "Inexhaustible mystery." Christology and Criticism, p. 306.



ideal ἀπάθεια Jesus was one who reacted as we react to the incitements which arise in daily intercourse with men and His reactions "bear all the characteristics of the corresponding emotions we are familiar with in our experience."<sup>1</sup> All of which serves "to carry home to us a very vivid impression of the truth and reality of our Lord's human nature."<sup>2</sup>

We see also in Jesus some elements which, while human, are nevertheless uniquely His. He has no consciousness of sin, and accordingly is never the subject of soteriological faith;<sup>3</sup> but does perfectly the will of the Father thus being an example of highest virtues. Indeed, Warfield is not content to view the reactions and emotions of Jesus using ours as a norm, thus proving His true manhood, but sees them from the standpoint of Christ's own perfection, thus adducing a model for our own behaviour.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Johannine Writings

"The deity of Jesus which in the Synoptics is in every way implied is ... in John expressly asserted, and that in the use of the most direct terminology the Greek language afforded."<sup>5</sup> To this extent John's Gospel is in advance of the Synoptics. John is written from no higher Christological point of view than the rest of the New Testament, and records nothing which reveals any more profoundly Jesus' consciousness of oneness with the Father than does Matt. 11:27,

(1) Biblical and Theological Studies, by Members of the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary, p. 83.

(2) Ibid., p. 83

(3) Ibid., p. 81

(4) Cf. Sermon "The Revelation of Man" in The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp. 3-26.

(5) The Lord of Glory, p. 183

nor a statement any more definitely Trinitarian than Matt. 28:17. The difference, then, is one of literary expression rather than substance of doctrine, and "accidents of literary expression do not argue intervals of time."<sup>1</sup>

"In the circumstances in which he wrote, John found it necessary to insist upon the elements of the person of Our Lord - (1) His true deity, (2) His true humanity, and (3) the unity of His person - in a manner which is more didactic in form than anything we find in the other writings of the New Testament."<sup>2</sup>

The Logos of John is not used in Philo's sense. "It is much more likely that it was borrowed directly from the native Jewish speculations which, like the speculations of Philo and those whom he most closely followed, are governed by the need for something to mediate between the transcendent God and the world of space and time."<sup>3</sup> In John 1:1 the word order throws the emphasis on "in the beginning" and "was" thus the phrase might be rendered "In the beginning the Word was." "What is declared is that 'in the beginning' - not 'from the beginning' - when first things began to be, the Word, not came into being, so

(1) The Lord of Glory, p. 184. N.B. To Warfield, Wilhelm Wrede's Das Messiasgeheimnis served to break down the artificial distinction between the Christology of the Synoptics and John, p.160.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p. 190. N.B. It might be well to note the distinctions which Warfield makes in the New Testament as a whole. The Pauline writings and other early epistles, having been written close to the time of the actual life of Jesus, speak little of the narrative events in His life. The simple explanation is that knowledge of the historical Jesus was the common property of the readers of the epistles. After a generation had gone by however, there arose the need for instruction on this matter and hence the Synoptics. They are not seen in contrast to Paul's writings, but rather as statements of that which was previously presupposed. At the time of John's writing there had arisen the need for express didactic teaching on the person of Christ, hence the Christologically framed fourth Gospel. Warfield sees no more conflict or progression of John over the Synoptics in the matter of Christology than there is in the Synoptics over Paul in the matter of the Jesus of history. The distinction is literary - implication on the one hand, express didactic statement on the other.

(3) Faith and Life, p. 85.

that He might be the first of those things which came into being, but already was."<sup>1</sup> Absolute eternity is asserted. When creation began, the Word already was.

The phrase "with God" is not the usual one; for it is far more pregnant, intimating not merely co-existence, or some sort of local relation, but an active relation of intercourse. When it is said that the Word was in the beginning in communion with God, the eternally distinct personality of the Word is suggested.

In reference to "And the Word was with God and the Word was God", Warfield makes the following paraphrase on the basis of the fact that the "with God" and "God" are in juxtaposition: "The Word was with God, do I say - nay God is what the Word was."<sup>2</sup> It is not sufficient to say that the Word was God's eternal Fellow, "we must say of Him that He is the eternal God's very self."<sup>3</sup> It is true that θεός is without the article here but that does not weaken the affirmation since quasi-proper names like God require it only when the individualizing emphasis is needed. Whatever makes God the Being which we call God, that John affirms the Word to have been eternally, and though identical ("the Word was God") is also distinguishable ("the Word was with God"). In the prologue of John, then, there are emphasised these three aspects of Christology (or more correctly Trinitarian thought): (1) Eternal subsistence, (2) Eternal intercommunion, and (3) Eternal identity.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, in John 1:18 the phrase μονογενὴς θεός standing as it does without an article serves to throw up into emphasis the quality rather than the

(1) Faith and Life, p. 87

(2) Ibid., p. 90

(3) Ibid.,

(4) Ibid., p. 87.

individuality of the person so designated. Here the verb "is" not "was" serves to show the continuity of the pre-existent life, to wit, that He is still "with God" in the full sense which the external relation in John 1:1 intimated. This being true, He has much more than 'seen' God and is fully able to 'interpret' God to man.<sup>1</sup>

When John says that "the Word became flesh", rather than "came in flesh", as in I John 4:2, what is emphasised is not the continuity through change (as in the epistle) but rather the reality and completeness of the humanity assumed.<sup>2</sup>

John, having thus set forth his Christology in the prologue, has no difficulty in presenting the life of Our Lord on earth as the life of God in flesh, and in insisting at once on the glory that belongs to Him as God and on the humiliation which is brought to Him by the flesh. It is distinctly a "duplex life"<sup>3</sup> which he ascribes to Christ, and he attributes to Him without embarrassment all the powers and modes of activity appropriate on the one hand to Deity and on the other to sinless (John 8:46; Cf. 14:30; I John 3:5) human nature. "In a true sense his portrait of Our Lord (throughout the gospel) is a dramatization of the God-man which he presents to our contemplation in his prologue."<sup>4</sup>

In line with these declarations, Warfield sees in the Gospel of John precisely the Christ of the creed of Chalcedon. His method is the same, pointing out that while it is taught that Christ is of heavenly origin (8:23; 3:13), is preexistent (7:62) and eternal (17:5; Cf. 17:24; 8:58), came from the Father's side (8:42; 17:8) and very being (16:28; Cf. 8:42), claimed identity

(1) Biblical Doctrines, p. 194.

(2) Ibid., p. 192.

(3) Ibid., p. 195.

(4) Ibid., p. 195. Cf. The Lord of Glory, p. 163.



with the Father (10:30), and claimed to be a complete revelation of the Father (14:9; Cf. 8:19; 12:45), the truth of His human nature is everywhere assumed and endlessly illustrated; for He had a human soul (12:27), possessed bodily parts (20:27), experienced physical affections such as weariness (4:6) and thirst (19:28), suffering and death. The love of compassion was his (13:24), and there came forth from His being such emotions as indignation (9:33,38), joy (15:11; 17:13), excitement (11:33; 12:27; 13:21), sympathy (11:35), and thankfulness (6:11; 11:41). Only one human characteristic was alien to Him... He was without sin. "Our Lord, as reported by John, knew Himself to be true God and true man in one indivisible person, the common subject of the qualities which belong to each."<sup>1</sup>

#### The Epistles of Paul

As we have had occasion to mention, Warfield saw the Christology of Paul as a presupposed item. For instance, in the matter of Paul's religious worship, a first glance might leave the impression that its object presents itself in a thoroughgoing dualism - *Κύριος* and *θεός*, - but with a proper understanding this dualism resolves itself into complete unity. God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are constantly envisaged by Paul as one and yet he tells us that we who have one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ know perfectly well that there is no God but one and to worship any other is idolatry (I Cor. 8:4,6).<sup>2</sup>

In addition to his regular method of setting down beside each other the various allusions to humanity and deity, Warfield treats three passages in

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p. 200. N.B. The above paragraph is an abstract of Biblical material by Warfield in Biblical Doctrines, pp. 198-200, and in Biblical and Theological Studies (by the Princeton Seminary Faculty), pp. 67, 70, 73, 83.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, pp. 237-238.

particular as all but explicit references to the doctrine of the Two Natures: Romans 1:3-4; 9:5; II Timothy 2:8. The phrase κατὰ σάρκα (Rm.1:3; 9:5) has reference not to a mode of being through which Christ passed nor does it connote any ethical contrast, but refers rather to the human nature according to which Christ was made of the seed of David and according to which He was an Israelite to the glory of the covenant people. Even had these passages stopped after only introducing the limitation "according to the flesh" the intimation would have been express enough, namely that there was another element to His make-up which was not according to the flesh. The allusions to the resurrection in two of the passages and the express statement in the third (Romans 9:5) to the effect that He is "God over all blessed forever" complete the picture.<sup>1</sup> Warfield does not think of Christ in His pre-resurrection and post-resurrection modes of being as differing in any way which can be naturally expressed by the contrasting terms "flesh" and "spirit".<sup>2</sup> "According to the flesh" includes all His humanity, while the "Spirit of holiness" is a designation of His divine nature,<sup>3</sup> - the holiness spoken of is not acquired but intrinsic<sup>4</sup> - thus the resurrection did not make Him the Son of God but merely gave a powerful demonstration of the fact.<sup>5</sup> The phrase "son of God" in the first passage (Rm.1:3-4) is a metaphysical designation and tells us what Christ is in His being of being, and that is - He is just what God is.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps because of the various forms of the developmental hypothesis which were held at the turn of the century, Warfield thought it most important to argue

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(1) Warfield argues the matter of divergent readings at great length. Cf. "Princeton Theological Review", vol. XV, p. 151; The Lord of Glory, pp. 228ff.; Biblical Doctrines, pp. 235-252.

(2) Ibid., p. 245.

(3) Ibid., p. 247.

(4) Ibid., p. 249.

(5) Ibid., p. 251.

(6) Ibid., pp. 184, 247.

the existence of this Christology of the two natures in the earliest of the Christian writers, Paul. We list only two more samples which illustrate his close scrutiny of the text.

In reference to Romans 5:8-10 Warfield wrote,

"God commends His love to us - or as it is strengtheningly put, His own love to us - by dying for us while we were yet sinners? No - by Christ's dying for us while we were yet sinners! But how does God commend His own love to us by someone else dying for us? Obviously the relation between Christ and God is thought of as so intimate that Christ's dying is equivalent to God Himself dying."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield maintained that the phrase "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" was, in the usage of Paul, a Christian periphrasis for "God", denoting the purely Divine. While it was a customary formula, it had not hardened into a mechanically repeated series of words. The variations form quite an argument for Christology, especially the variations to be found in Thessalonians I and II. Taking his cue from Lightfoot who called attention to the symmetrical structure of the two epistles (each is divided into two parts, the first mainly narrative and the second hortatory, with each part introduced by αὐτὸς δέ followed by the Divine name), Warfield goes on to set down in order the four introductions.<sup>2</sup> The very unusual argument for the Trinitarian Christology is seen immediately.

The Divine name in each case is as follows:

I Thess. 3:11 "...our God and Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

I Thess. 5:23 "... the God of peace."

II Thess. 2:16 "... our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father."

II Thess. 3:16 "... the Lord of peace."

(1) The Lord of Glory, p. 231.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p. 218.

Paul is in these instances simply praying to God for his converts; and the God to whom he thus prays can be described as God the Father and/or the Lord Jesus Christ in any combination. Warfield clinched his argument by remarking succinctly, "If it was with any difference of consciousness that Paul addresses God or the Lord, or God and the Lord together, in his prayers, he certainly has taken great pains to obscure the fact."<sup>1</sup>

### The Epistle to the Hebrews

The Epistle to the Hebrews presents us with a well-defined double argument. Not only is Jesus Christ alluded to in the Epistle in a manner which argues directly for His deity, but there is also attributed to Him the task of accomplishing a salvation subsequently described to be one which only God could accomplish. In connection with the first line of argument, Warfield saw in the "metaphysical Sonship" of Hebrews a transcendent conception of Christ in which He is clothed with all the attributes of God. "In word, what is given to us in the 'Son' is here declared to be God as 'Son' standing over against God as 'Father'." It was the Son that God was speaking of in Psalm 45:6 when He said, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever."<sup>2</sup>

For the writer of Hebrews, however, the main interest is soteriological and it is this aspect which gives importance<sup>to</sup> the ontological discussion. The titles given to Christ in the epistle are predominantly soteriological, for instance, "Mediator of the New Covenant", "Ground of Eternal Salvation", "Author of Salvation", "Author and Perfecter of our Faith", "Forerunner into that which is within the veil", "the Apostle and High Priest of our Confession",

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p. 219

(2) The Lord of Glory, pp. 255-256; Biblical Doctrines, p. 188.



"Great Shepherd of the Sheep", "Priest", and "High Priest". "It is only because Jesus is the 'Son of God' that He may be fitly described in His saving work by these high designations."<sup>1</sup> The writer of the epistle had before him the task of removing from the minds of his Jewish readers the offense they were in danger of taking at Christ's lowly life and shameful death on earth. This earthly humiliation finds its abundant justification, he tells them, in the greatness of the end which it sought and attained.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, it becomes true that

"The glory of the New Covenant is that it has been introduced by God the 'Son', - that is, Lord of all: by whom, indeed, the worlds were made in the depths of eternity, - that is who is the eternal Creator of all that is: who, in fact, is in Himself the effulgence of God's glory and the impress of His substance - that is to say, all that God is: and by whom, because He is all that God is, the universe is held in being."<sup>3</sup>

Whenever man perceives the true nature of his position as a guilty creature before a holy Creator, whenever he views his own corruption and the consequent greatness of the salvation he is in need of, he tends to cry out, "Who then can be saved?" Warfield maintains that the answer to this question must always be, "With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible."<sup>4</sup> The propitiatory death of Jesus, the reconciliation of God by the sacrifice of Himself, Christ's constant intercession for His people - these constitute the work of Christ and a work which none but this Christ can do.<sup>5</sup> The nature of Christ is thus seen in the offices which He fills, or rather - to be more in keeping with Warfield's method of presentation - Christ fills His offices only because He is what He is, God Incarnate.

(1) The Lord of Glory, pp. 259-260.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, pp. 185-186.

(3) The Lord of Glory, p. 258.

(4) Cf. Sermon on Mark 10:27 entitled "The Paradox of Omnipotence", The Power of God unto Salvation, pp. 93-118.

(5) The role of the doctrine of the Two Natures in the reconciliation which Christ wrought, as well as the intercession which He continues to do on behalf of His own is vital. This aspect of Warfield's thought we have left until dealing with His soteriology.

## The Virgin Birth

Warfield was asked by "The American Journal of Theology" to write a short article answering the question, "Is the doctrine of the supernatural birth of Jesus essential to Christianity?" His article appeared in 1906<sup>1</sup> giving an affirmative answer, after setting forth the proviso that it must be New Testament Christianity that is meant, and that by "essential" it should be implied that a statement of said Christianity would be incomplete without mention of the Virgin Birth. The following sentence, written from Warfield's traditional standpoint, i.e., the Chalcedonian Christology, very clearly shows his position:

"The Christianity of the New Testament remembering the two natures -- which nowadays nearly everyone forgets -- offers us in Our Lord's person, not a mere man (perhaps in some sense made God) nor mere God (perhaps in some sense made man), but a true God-man, who, being all that God is, and at the same time all that man is, has come into the world in a fashion suitable to his dual nature, conceived indeed in a virgin's womb, and born of a woman under the law, but not by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, but solely by the will of God who He is."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield saw some rather strange characteristics in the denials of the Virgin Birth by his contemporaries. Men who did not give way to the temptation of minimizing the Biblical attention to the Virgin Birth, nor of whom it could be said <sup>that they</sup> <sub>^</sub> were reacting to gross perversions of the doctrine, nevertheless denied its actuality. Yet these same men preferred to see a truth in the account, namely, that the product of Mary's womb was holy. In other words, what Mary was competent to attest -- "I know not a man" -- was rejected while what she was not competent to attest -- the holiness of the product of her womb -- was accepted. Warfield was up against here a form of "demythologizing" which he claimed was

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(1) "The American Journal of Theology," vol. X, pp. 21-30. Reprinted in Christology and Criticism, pp. 447-458.

(2) Christology and Criticism, p. 454.

most unscientific. What the so-called "critics" had actually done was to throw criticism and all its findings out the window and to fall back on a "bald anti-supernaturalistic preconception." All suggestions were dictated not by the facts as ascertained by critical inquiry, but by a philosophical principle assumed at the outset.<sup>1</sup>

The question of whether or not a man can be saved who does not believe in the Virgin Birth is not germane, for the issue being discussed is not what we must do to be saved but "what it behooved Jesus Christ to be and do that He might save us."<sup>2</sup> In light of Warfield's Soteriology, to be discussed later, he would certainly not maintain that one must believe in the Virgin Birth in order to be saved but would doubtless add, "No other Christ than the one born of a virgin is able to save a man."

It is not, however, a matter of little importance whether a man believes in the fact of the Virgin Birth or not, "his whole faith is bound up with that of which it is the symbol and sign. If the Lord be not a supernatural being, whose account cannot be found in natural causes, then the whole of historical Christianity is an imagination and a dream."<sup>3</sup> The supernatural aspect of Christianity, the Incarnation and the consequent redemption wrought in Christ, would each be sheared of some portion of its meaning and value in denying the Virgin Birth. Warfield readily acknowledged that to an "autosoteric" Christianity built upon natural theology the doctrine of the supernatural birth of Jesus would be devoid of significance, and therefore incredible. By the same token, to the "heterosoteric" Christianity of the New Testament the Virgin Birth is an essential. Warfield claimed that his opponents were actually granting him the basis of his

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(1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. XII, p. 582.

(2) Christology and Criticism, p. 457.

(3) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. VII, p. 158.

argument when they spoke of the doctrine as the inevitable, involuntary postulate of those who had found in Jesus their divine Master. This was but to say that in the logic of the heart the supernatural Redeemer demands for Himself a supernatural origin. The question may then be pressed, "Do you really believe in a supernatural Redeemer?" If so, why then the denial of the Virgin Birth? Something is wrong somewhere. Warfield claims it to be a "chariness with respect to the supernatural."<sup>1</sup> If we would do justice to the case, said Warfield, we must affirm that

"when the Life itself (which is also the truth itself) entered into the conditions of human existence, it could not but come, according to its nature, creatively -- bringing its own self-existing Life with it, and not making a round-about way so as to appear only now to begin, by way of derivation, to exist."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield did not withhold a bit of satire from those who asserted that the section of the Apostles' Creed, "born of a virgin," asserts nothing over and above the true humanity of our Lord. "Nothing," said he, "over and above the true humanity of our Lord, but His Virgin-birth."<sup>3</sup> But fortunately our logical capacity is not the condition of salvation and even blasphemy itself against the Son may be forgiven. "It would surely be unfortunate if weakness of intellect were more fatal than weakness of heart. On the whole, we may congratulate ourselves that it was more imperative that Jesus, by whom the salvation has been wrought, should know what it behooved Him to be and to do that He might save us, than it is that we should fully understand it. But, on the other hand, it will scarcely do to represent ignorance or error as advantageous to salvation. It certainly is worth while to put our trust in

(1) "Princeton Theological Review," vol. VII, p. 158.

(2) Christology and Criticism, p. 454

(3) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. VII, p. 158.



Jesus as intelligently as it may be given us to do so. And it certainly will over and over again be verified in experience that he who casts himself upon Jesus as his divine Redeemer, will find the fact of the Virgin Birth of this Saviour not only consonant with his faith and an aid to it, but a postulate of it without which he would be puzzled and distressed.<sup>1</sup>

### The Hypostatic Union

Though he nowhere gives it a very detailed treatment, it is evident that Warfield holds to a doctrine of anhypostasia such as was worked out by post-Calvinistic Reformed divines like Zachary Ursinus.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it is just this anhypostasia<sup>3</sup> which delivers Warfield from the charge of Nestorianism (in the matter of the dual centers of consciousness). The Incarnation is just that, God Incarnate. It represents a change in the life-history of the Logos. This does not mean docetism, for "He entered upon a mode of existence in which the experiences that belong to human beings would also be His. The dependence, the weakness, which constitute the very idea of flesh, in contrast with God, would now enter into His personal experience."<sup>4</sup>

The human nature of Christ was not a person as over against the divine nature: accordingly Warfield rejected the progressive Incarnation theory of Isaac Dorner.<sup>5</sup> He was not thereby driven to the Kenosis theory because he was

(1) Christology and Criticism, p. 458.

(2) Admonitio Christiana, 1612. Also Zanchius' De Incarnatione.

(3) Scottish theologians have, in the past century, experienced little difficulty in jettisoning this doctrine as a product of 'Greek thought': A.B. Bruce, H. R. Mackintosh, and D. M. Baillie. D. M. McKinnon, however, asks of the latter in re. God Was In Christ, "Can we escape the anhypostasia as easily as Dr. Baillie does?" "Scottish Journal of Theology", vol. I, p. 208.

(4) Biblical Doctrines, p. 192.

(5) Christology and Criticism, p. 382.

prepared to say that

"God may enter the human race by assuming into personal union with Himself a human nature without any modification taking place in any of His divine attributes... and yet manifest ordinarily, in His life 'in the flesh' only those of His divine qualities which are compatible with the real human life which by virtue of His assumed human nature He willed to live."<sup>1</sup>

Can we, then, from the standpoint of this construction, say that Christ had any human individuality? Was He a man, or must we be content with the fact that He was Man? From Warfield we get the traditional Reformed answer, "He was in all things like His brethren, sin excepted."<sup>2</sup> His human temperament, however, is impossible to define in the sense in which we define other men's temperaments. We say of a man, "He is a quick thinker," or, "He is a generous man," or, "That man is patient," thus pointing out the prevailing characteristic; but the mark of Christ's individuality was harmonious completeness and all that was human manifested itself perfectly in Him.<sup>3</sup> The question of whether the humanity of Christ was individual or generic Warfield was inclined to treat as "only a relic of the discountenanced fiction of the 'real' existence of universals."<sup>4</sup> After expressing doubt as to the possibility of defining such a thing as generic human nature - "What is a 'universal man'?" And how could 'the whole of human nature' be gathered up in Jesus, except representatively...?"<sup>5</sup> - he concludes,

"Whether our Lord's nature is 'generic' or 'individual', it certainly - the Evangelists being witness - functioned in the days of His flesh

(1) Critical Reviews, p. 305

(2) The Power of God unto Salvation, p. 11.

(3) "The Emotional Life of Our Lord" from Biblical and Theological Studies by the Faculty of Princeton Seminary, p. 86. Cf. Wm. Temple in Christus Veritas, "...The greater the man, the less merely 'personal' is his humanity. He is more, not less, individual than others." pp. 151-152.

(4) Biblical and Theological Studies, by Faculty of Princeton Seminary, p. 84.

(5) Ibid., re. A. J. Mason's The Conditions of Our Lord's Life on Earth, p. 46.

as if it were individual; and we have the same reason for pronouncing it an individual human-nature that we have for pronouncing such any human nature of whose functioning we have knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

The flesh which Christ assumed was the flesh of unfallen man, maintains Warfield, since Paul says that He came, not in sinful flesh, but "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3).

"But this does not mean that the flesh he assumed was not under a curse: it means that the curse under which His flesh rested was not the curse of Adam's first sin but the curse of the sins of His people... <sup>2</sup>He who was not, even as man, under a curse, 'became a curse for us'. He was accursed, not because He became man, but because He bore the sins of His people; He suffered and died not because of the flesh He took but because of the sins He took. He was, no doubt, born of a woman, born under the law (Galatians 4:4) in one concrete act: He issued forth from the Virgin's womb already our sin-bearer. <sup>3</sup> But He was not sin-bearer because made of a woman: He was made of a woman that He might become sin-bearer; it was because of the suffering of death that He was made a little lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:9)."<sup>4</sup>

If a reader of Warfield's works were to confine himself to those didactic portions of a specifically Christological character he would doubtless at times be prone to lay at Warfield's door the charge of Nestorianism, and that the life of Christ has been made into something like an actor playing a dual role — first God, then man. But a further investigation of the complete works of the Princetonian reveal that the unipersonality of the person of Christ is more than

(1) Biblical and Theological Studies by Faculty of Princeton Seminary, p. 85.

(2) If we might be allowed a question from Barth's standpoint (Die Kirchliche Dogmatik, I,ii, pp. 167ff. as referred to by D. M. Baillie, op. cit., pp. 16ff.) How can we say that there rested on Christ the 'curse of the sins of His people' but not 'the curse of Adam's first sin'? The former certainly includes the latter. Presumably Christ assumed 'the curse of the sins of His People' in order that He might deliver them from the same. If, then, He did not know the 'curse of Adam's first sin', how then could He deliver us from that? We shall not discuss further on this point, however, for it seems that to a certain extent the issue is a verbal one. One of the main things which characterizes fallen flesh as distinguished from unfallen, for Warfield, was that the former was obnoxious in the sight of God. Christ, however, was well-pleasing to God.

(3) Here we see corrected the neglect which Barth claims is present in Calvin's Catechism of not fully allowing an atoning aspect to Christ's whole life. Dogmatics in Outline, chapter entitled, "Suffered..."

(4) "Emotional Life of Our Lord", pp. 89-90

a verbal link between two sets of attributes, for in passages in which we see his Christology at work, rather than being didactically set forth, we see that Warfield is quite in earnest when he says that the two natures are inseparably united in one person. All of the attributes of both natures are properly the attributes of the Person, the Theanthropos. Warfield never tires of saying that Christ is all that man is and at the same time all that God is.

Perhaps the most tremendous implication Warfield saw imbedded in this fact was the authority of Jesus. He was personally the Truth; He acted in truth and He spoke infallibly. He was never convicted of sin or error and there was no guile of any sort, moral or intellectual, in His mouth. Nothing could be more untrue than to say that He was simply a man of His age and that His life and consciousness were "in form completely human."<sup>1</sup> It would be nearer the truth to say that the entire New Testament was written in order to show that the exact opposite was true. How could it be said that one was within the human limitations of his time who could say, "Before Abraham was, I am"?<sup>2</sup>

It was upon such a foundation that Warfield rested his view of the inspiration of the Scriptures, the argumentum fortissimum being, "It is the doctrine which Christ believed."<sup>3</sup>

### The Foresight of Jesus

The view of the Eschatological school of Schweitzer, et al., was, of course, appalling to Warfield. That Jesus entered upon His ministry with no other expectation than success, coming to the slow recognition, first of the possibility, then of the certainty of failure; or at least since failure was impossible for

(1) H. R. Mackintosh, Person of Jesus Christ, p. 2.

(2) Cf. Critical Reviews, pp. 308-309.

(3) Revelation and Inspiration, p. 74.



the mission He had come to perform, of the necessity of passing through suffering to its success, betraying, even in Gethsemane, the lingering hope that the extremity of death might be avoided, constitutes a view that is nothing short of pathetic. According to it, Jesus miscalculated and failed; and then naturally sought - or His followers sought for Him - to save the failure by inventing a new denouement. The net result of the view is a Jesus for whom there is really no reason to trust at all. "Is there any reason to believe that He will ever return? Can the foresight which has repeatedly failed so miserably be trusted still, - for what we choose to separate out from the mass of His experiences as the core of the matter?"<sup>1</sup>

In opposition to the view of the Eschatological school, Warfield set forth the foresight of Jesus. There is no indication in the evangelical narrative "that Our Lord began His ministry with the expectation of accomplishing it through the instrumentality of successful preaching alone."<sup>2</sup> His was rather a life "from the beginning lived out...in full view of its drift and its issue."<sup>3</sup> Christ came to perform a specific task, all the elements of which were determined beforehand in the Trinitarian Covenant of Redemption.<sup>4</sup> He was not helplessly led to His death, but determinately went to it as His mission and "accordingly every suggestion of escape from it by virtue of His intrinsic divine powers, whether omnipotence or omniscience, was treated by Him first and last as a temptation of the evil one."<sup>5</sup> In short, there was at no time any element of failure in Jesus' life for He never intended to do anything other than

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p. 92. Warfield does not minimize the problems involved in some of Jesus' eschatological sayings Mark 9:1; 13:30 and Matt. 10:23, but says that "it is distinctly a problem of exegesis". It is evident that Warfield has completely dismissed the possibility that Jesus "who has never been convicted of error in anything else," could have erred in these statements. Cf. p. 97.

(2) Saviour of the World, p. 73.

(3) Biblical Doctrines, p. 74.

(4) Saviour of the World, p. 234.

(5) Christology and Criticism, p. 161.

what He did. With full consciousness He followed, straight to its goal, the "predestined pathway".

What is more, this divinely appointed mission was adumbrated in the Old Testament Scriptures sufficiently to enable all who were not "foolish and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken" to perceive that the Christ must needs have lived just this life and fulfilled just this destiny. Part of His teaching ministry was taken up with correcting the false notions of His followers concerning His mission. Warfield lists, among others, the following texts: Matt. 16:21 "Jesus began to show His disciples how He must... suffer...and be killed...and be raised again." Luke 4:43, "...I must preach ...for therefore am I sent..." Luke 9:14, "The Son of Man must suffer..." Luke 24:7, "The Son of Man must be delivered up..." John 3:14, "The Son of Man must be lifted up." To read these verses as the result of the 'mind of the Church' or the invention of Jesus' followers involves not merely correcting these verses but rewriting the entire New Testament from the standpoint of an a priori theory.<sup>1</sup>

"The contention that the doctrine of a suffering Messiah was first introduced by the Christians to save the situation when their Messiah succumbed to the machinations of His foes and poured out His life on Calvary involves the complete rewriting of the New Testament in the interests of an 'a priori' theory."<sup>2</sup>

Did Jesus, then, proclaim Himself to be the Messiah? The answer is an emphatic, yes. Jesus' own works and teaching, the testimony of the angelic messengers at His birth,<sup>3</sup> and even the subject spirits of Satan all proclaim

(1) Saviour of the World, p. 79.

(2) Ibid., pp. 78-80.

(3) "Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins." "'HIS' people," says Warfield, "Jesus' people although it is clear it is Jehovah's people that are meant". The Lord of Glory, p. 119.

Him to be the Messiah. Warfield cannot put this too strongly it seems: "His whole career and teaching alike were ordered to convey to every seeing eye the great intelligence."<sup>1</sup>

Emphatic as this fact may be, "the Synoptic narrative is marked no more by the stress it lays on the Messiahship of Jesus than by the transfigured conception of this Messiahship which it in every line insists upon."<sup>2</sup> The current Messianic expectation was a distorted one,<sup>3</sup> and while Jesus generally proclaimed His Messiahship, He, at the same time, undertook to change the current conception of it. When Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to bring peace" what He is doing is protecting His disciple from the false expectation that He, the Messiah, would immediately usher in a reign of peace. Likewise Jesus' instructions to John the Baptist in prison serve not only to announce the fact that He is the Messiah but also to correct the false notion that might have existed in the mind of the Baptist. The substance of the message was not that John might see in His works such things as he had been looking for in the Messiah, but that he might see in them such things as he ought to be looking for.<sup>4</sup> All in all the Messianic ideal presented in the synoptics as fulfilled in Jesus finds its Old Testament basis in (1) the David King who reigns forever over the people of God, which kingdom is interpreted in terms of Daniel's dream of the heaven-founded kingdom of saints, (2) the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah, and (3) the fundamental promise that Jehovah shall visit His people for redemption.<sup>5</sup>

(1) The Lord of Glory, p. 118.

(2) Ibid., p. 119.

(3) Ibid., p. 119; cf. Wm. Manson in Jesus the Messiah, "The Christian tradition of Jesus as Messiah and Son of Man has in fact nothing except these titles in common with the Jewish national and apocalyptic visions of the coming Deliverer, nor is its debt any greater to any of the myths of a world-Soter which were current in that age." p. 12.

(4) The Lord of Glory, p. 118.

(5) Ibid., p. 119; Christology and Criticism, pp. 7, 21-22, 27, 119.

Another practical working out of the unipersonality of Christ is seen in Warfield's treatment of His prophetic office. The man Christ Jesus, who is yet all that God is, is not only capable of telling us infallible truths about God, but is Himself, personally, a true revelation of God.<sup>1</sup> There is present in Warfield very little akin to a teaching of a Deus absconditus in reference to the Incarnation. The glory which was the Incarnate Word's was

"open to sight, the actual object of observation. Jesus Christ was obviously more than man; He was obviously God. His actually observed glory, John tells us (John 1:14) was a glory as of the only begotten from the Father...men recognized and could not help but recognize in Jesus Christ the unique Son of God...The visible glory of the incarnated Word was such a glory as the unique Son of God, sent forth from the Father, who was full of grace and truth, would naturally manifest."<sup>2</sup>

What obscuring may be present lies not in the Incarnation itself, but rather in the sin-bred blindness of those before whom He lived. Even the element of veiling on the part of Christ Himself, such as the use of the parabolic method of teaching, was due indirectly to the sin of men. His use of parables was primarily for teaching, not concealing, truth; but in so doing, His teaching was not clear to many, who, if they understood, would have stopped Him in violence. Even here the veiling, then, had as its ultimate purpose revealing, "There is nothing hid save that it may be manifested."<sup>3</sup>

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(1) Revelation and Inspiration, p. 28.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p. 193. Cf. Critical Reviews, p. 308.

(3) Faith and Life, p. 59.



### The Resurrection of Christ

In many different ways the resurrection of Christ emerges in the theology of Warfield as a fact of central importance. In I Corinthians 15, he sees Paul implicating not only his faith but that of all the earliest preachers of the Gospel, and indeed that of the entire Christian community of his day, in the fact of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself when asked for a sign pointed to this sign as "His single and sufficient credential" (e.g. the "sign of the prophet Jonas," Matt. 12:39; 16:14, and the destruction of the temple, John 2:19).<sup>1</sup>

Just how this centrality is understood by Warfield is seen in the following five points which, incidentally, are to be found repeated almost verbatim in at least three different sources.<sup>2</sup>

(1) From the standpoint of Christian apologetics he suggests that it is extremely doubtful if Christianity would have been believed as a supernaturally given religion if Christ had remained holden of the grave. "From the empty grave of Jesus the enemies of the cross turn away in unconcealable dismay."<sup>3</sup>

(2) As the revelation of "life and immortality" Christ's resurrection means a revolutionized relationship which believers bear to life, death, and life beyond death.<sup>4</sup>

(3) His claims, His teachings, and His promises all receive their seal from the fact. Especially since the resurrection comprised part of His teaching

(1) The Saviour of the World, p. 196.

(2) "The Resurrection of Christ a Fundamental Doctrine," "The Homiletic Review," vol. XXXII, pp. 388-397; "Christianity and the Resurrection," "The Bible Student and Teacher," vol. VIII, pp. 277-283; "The Risen Jesus," The Saviour of the World, pp. 191-213.

(3) The Saviour of the World, p. 208.

(4) Ibid., p. 208.

Warfield asks, "Had the one sign which He chose failed, would not His declarations have failed with it?"<sup>1</sup> Of course ~~there is implicated here~~ <sup>this would implicate</sup> also the hope based upon His words, such as "Come unto me and I will give you rest," "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world," and "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

(4) The resurrection is fundamental to the Christian's assurance that Christ's work is complete and His redemption is accomplished. "It is not enough," claims Warfield, "that we should be able to say, 'He was delivered up for our trespasses.' We must be able to add, 'He was raised for our justification.'"<sup>2</sup> His dying manifests His love and willingness to save; His rising again manifests His power and ability to save.

(5) His rising from the dead is basic to our hope for resurrection from the dead. By being in His own person the first-fruits of the victory over the grave, "His resurrection drags ours in its train."<sup>3</sup>

Warfield had little patience with various denials and evasions of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was the result of the current "chariness with respect to the supernatural,"<sup>4</sup> he claimed. Moreover it was not simply the case of an isolated doctrine being attacked, but the case of a trend which was reducing all of Christianity to a natural religion. Warfield did not display an inordinate interest in the resurrection as a sheer "physical" fact, as should be evident from the material summarized above, but he becomes

(1) The Saviour of the World, p. 209.

(2) Ibid., p. 210.

(3) Ibid., p. 211.

(4) Ibid., p. 199.

extremely suspicious that natural theology is at work whenever such a fact as the resurrection — or say, ~~that of~~ the virgin birth — is denied.<sup>1</sup> He was by no means content with a mere "Jesus lives" affirmation, nor did he think it legitimate to make an antinomy exist between the resurrection of the body and the reigning Lord. The issue is not whether our faith is to be grounded in the mere resuscitation of a dead man two thousand years ago, or in a living Lord reigning in the heavens. On the contrary, our faith is directed by Paul to "Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David" (II Tim. 2:8).<sup>2</sup> Those who would flee from the "physical" fact of the resurrection of the body to the "living and reigning Christ" have not really discovered Him, — "the living and reigning Christ has always been the object of the adoring faith of Christians" — they have neglected or denied the resurrected Christ.<sup>3</sup>

There is, of course, involved in all of this the tendency felt in Warfield's time to transmute Christianity into a body of universal truths independent of historical occurrences, in which connection we deal with Warfield's thought a little more in detail in subsequent chapters.

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(1) Cf. Dogmatics in Outline by Karl Barth, p. 100, where precisely this same line of argument is put forward.

(2) Warfield's translation, The Saviour of the World, p. 190.

(3) Ibid., p. 201.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE JESUS OF HISTORY

#### The Movement

The phrase "Jesus of History" has come to be for us a terminus technicus. A fairly well defined notion comes to mind when one speaks of the "Jesus of History movement" or of the place a bit of theological writing might give to the "Historical Jesus." To be concrete, the movement is perhaps most accurately and simply designated as that which is dealt with in Albert Schweitzer's The Quest of the Historical Jesus, the outstanding men of which, to name a few, are David Friedrich Strauss, Bruno Bauer, Ernest Renan, Johannes Weiss, and Wilhelm Wrede, not to mention Schweitzer himself. Their work is generally spoken of as a reaction to the Christ of the Creeds. And just as the wandering Arab moves on when the oasis has become an arid waste, so these thinkers moved on; for the Christological statements of the Creeds left them a "baffling and mysterious figure" with no life. He neither moved nor breathed. He was not a person but a collection of facts constructed out in the air almost mathematically. And so the quest was on to find in history a real Jesus, a personage who did live and breathe. It is undeniable that this movement with its "recovery of the historical Jesus" and the counter-movement which it set in motion has left theology itself with much more life and breath in it.<sup>1</sup>

However, as the movement ran its course, the results were definitely more than a recovery of the humanity of Jesus Christ. There was seen the action of a mighty wedge driven between the doctrine of Christ's full humanity and

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(1) Cf. D. M. Baillie, God was in Christ, pp. 30-39.



that of his deity, the former being an historical fact, and the latter a mythological ideal fostered by Paul and the early Christian community. Cries of "Back to Jesus" (from Paul) were heard and the height of the whole matter was reached when Rev. Roberts wrote his much-discussed article in the "Hibbert Journal" of 1908 entitled "Jesus or Christ?". It would probably not be fair to present passages from Rev. Roberts' article as being a good sample of the level of scholarship which went into this movement but a few citations will show clearly the extent to which the schism between Jesus and Christ had gone in the minds of nineteenth and early twentieth century liberals.

"Are the claims to be presently set forth made on behalf of a spiritual 'Ideal' to which we may provisionally apply the word 'Christ', or are they predicated of Jesus?"<sup>1</sup> "The eminent scholars with whom I have been dealing habitually quote words and actions attributed to Jesus and apply them to Christ. They thus gain for the mystical and spiritual Christ objectivity which, assuming His historicity, belongs properly only to Jesus. This process seems to me wholly illegitimate. I want to put this matter quite as clearly and yet as reverently as I can, for it is the very heart of the disturbance which the modern mind feels in the presence of the enormous claims made on behalf of Jesus... They (the scholars) habitually quote as divinely decisive, words and actions attributed to Jesus of Nazareth. This conveys to me the impression that they believe Jesus was God."<sup>2</sup>

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(1) Jesus or Christ? Hibbert Journal Supplement for 1909, p. 207.

(2) Ibid., p. 281

## WARFIELD AND HISTORICAL CRITICISM

Benjamin Warfield's theological career lasted from 1878 to 1921. He saw the movement at its peak and lived on to watch the wave spend itself on the beach. He did not, however, live long enough to view the revival of Christology seen today in the Theology of the Word.

From a knowledge of Warfield's general position, it would take no sooth-sayer to predict his distaste of most of the work of the Jesus of History movement. He could not condemn historical criticism per se however, for he was an advocate of what he called historic Christianity, meaning by this, not only the faith that has been historically held by the Church but a faith in which the historical element is basic.<sup>1</sup> Precisely what characterizes Christianity among the other religions of the world,

"is that it is a 'historical religion', that is, a religion whose facts are its doctrines; which does not consist in a 'tone of feeling', a way of looking at things - as for example the perception of a Father's hand in all the chances and changes of life, - but has to tell of a series of great redemptive acts in which God the Lord has actually intervened in the complex of nature and the stream of history in a definitely supernatural manner. If these facts are denied as actual occurrences in time and space, Christianity is denied; if they are neglected, Christianity is neglected. Christianity is dismissed from the world of reality and evaporated into a sentiment, - 'an iridescent dream'."<sup>2</sup>

In the realm of soteriology we see Warfield making this same strong emphasis on the historical aspect. A man commits a sin, in time and space of course, and the resulting sense of moral self-condemnation is met in the Gospel not by a mere principle, such as the goodness of God, but by a fact, an expiation, a payment for sin which itself has taken place in time and space.<sup>3</sup>

(1) The Right of Systematic Theology, p. 61.

(2) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. XIX, p. 151.

(3) Cf. Christology and Criticism, p. 340.

Since then the very core of Christianity is bound up with historical events, Christianity must allow historical criticism; even more than this, it must employ this criticism itself, for everything found out concerning these 'redemptive events' is a contribution to men's knowledge of God. Warfield lamented the prejudice in many conservative quarters against the very sound of such terms as "Higher Criticism". It is "not only legitimate but useful," he wrote, "and not only useful but necessary." He deplored likewise the distinction of 'evangelical' and 'rationalistic' criticism. One might as well speak of evangelical and rationalistic mathematics, he said. "There are no other varieties except good and bad..."<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, though Warfield agreed or disagreed on the basis of one's conclusions, we find him giving words of commendation or derogation on the basis of the consistency of the critical method followed. Strangely enough, some of his highest words of praise are reserved for the work of the most radical of critics while others, who actually had more conservative results to offer, received the lash for their inconsistency.<sup>2</sup>

A strong effort was seen in Warfield's time to make Christianity independent of historical occurrences and thus impervious to historical criticism. On many sides was heard the cry that Christianity cannot depend on historical events since its essence is in eternal, universal truths. Lessing's words were oft quoted, "Accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason," and Kant's, "That historical belief is a duty and belongs to salvation is superstition".<sup>3</sup> Troeltsch made the statement that if the non-historicity of Jesus were established "there would be some real gain".<sup>4</sup> And even a man like Abraham Kuyper wrote that the failure to solve critical

(1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. III, p. 142.

(2) Cf. Warfield's reaction to J. Weiss and Bousset, discussed later in this chapter.

(3) As referred by Warfield, Christology and Criticism, p. 322

(4) Ibid., p. 326.

objections could rob one of the certainty of his faith no more than success could strengthen it,<sup>1</sup> which statement, if it does not mean agreement to the general drift of the above, means (even worse) that we will just pay no attention to the results of criticism, or, we believe in something so strongly that though it fall our faith in it will remain. The tack was taken by F. Ziller of abandoning the historical Jesus question and clinging to the historical Christ validated by his fruits in the world.<sup>2</sup>

None of this satisfied Warfield. Insisting that there be no separation of the religious life and experience of the believer from the Christian basis in history, he argued that basic to all such attempts would have to be the assumption of; (1) the adequacy of pure reason to produce the whole body of necessary religious truths, and (2) the inadequacy of history to provide a firm foundation for religious conviction. To admit these things would be indeed to make one impervious to the critical assault. One would then be in an impregnable fortress completely emancipated from the critical struggle. But the price of such an emancipation would be no less than Christianity itself, for "the obvious effect of the detachment of Christianity from all historical fact is to dismiss Christianity out of the realm of fact."<sup>3</sup> There is only one way to turn our backs on the criticism of historical occurrences and that is to turn our backs on historical occurrences; and in doing this we turn our backs on Jesus.

"Did He ever live on earth? And living on earth, did He not manifest that unwavering faith in Providence which reveals to us the Father-God? Otherwise what is it to us that He 'still' lives in heaven?...Jesus is a historical figure. What He was, no less than what He did, is a matter of historical testimony. To weed out the historical is to

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(1) Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology, p. 563.

(2) Die moderne Bibelwissenschaft und die Krisis der evangelischen Kirche, pp. 99-100: as referred to by Warfield, op. cit., pp. 328-331.

(3) The Saviour of the World, p. 203.



leave one without a Jesus whether on earth or in heaven. And surely Christianity without Jesus is just no Christianity at all."<sup>1</sup>

For those who followed this line of evasion Warfield wished to rephrase their own question, "Is the historical Christ essential to Christianity?" into "Is your so-called Christianity to which the historical Christ is no longer essential, still Christian?"<sup>2</sup>

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The solution to the problem which presented itself in the host of liberal critics and scholars was not to be found in any evasive action or finesse. The situation called for a frontal attack, which might be most easily divided into two categories:

(1) Critique of the canon of criticism itself used by most of the radical critics and the occasional inconsistency of its application, together with an evaluation of the findings of radical criticism.

(2) Positive approach to the selfsame problems with which the critics were wrestling. (Largely exegetical).

As to the first category, there seem to run through Warfield's criticism of the Jesus of History movement three lines of attack:

(1) The canon of criticism by which most of the critics proceeded is a false one and is unscientific since it betrays a preconceived bias against the supernatural.

(2) The criticism is seldom carried out with consistency. In the case of those critics who did start from a sound basis and yet ended up with 'liberal' conclusions, consistency is the only corrective needed. In the

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(1) The Saviour of the World, p. 206

(2) Christology and Criticism, p. 350.

instances of critics proceeding on false assumptions, a pursuit of their own methods with ruthless logic would cause them to be left with conclusions radical enough in themselves to serve as a reductio ad absurdum.

(3) The bulk of the results, if accepted, would mean that Christianity could no longer be considered a religion of divine redemption but at best a naturalistic system of ethics.

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## THE POLEMICS OF THE MOVEMENT

"The real impulse for the whole assault upon the trustworthiness of the portrait of Jesus drawn in the Gospels lies not in the region of historical investigation but in that of dogmatic prejudice - or to be more specific, of naturalistic preconception. The moving spirit of the critical reconstruction is the determination to have a 'natural' as over against the 'supernatural' Jesus of the evangelists."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield took occasion whenever possible to play one critic against another in an effort to discredit them. In comparing P.W.Schmeidel and Van Manen he commented, "his [Schmeidel's] criticism seems so dominated by this end, [viz., the elimination of the supernatural], in a word, that it is wholly determined by it and is pressed only so far as to secure it: when the supernatural is once eliminated Schmeidel's interest in criticism apparently rapidly fades away." Van Manen seems to be interested in criticism for criticism's sake. "He seems accordingly a much more radical critic than Schmeidel, when the fact is probably only that he is a much more consistent critic than he."<sup>2</sup>

There can be no question as to the picture of our Lord if we can trust the report which the evangelists give of His words. Basic then to an investigation seeking for another picture of Jesus is a distrust in the one presented by the Evangelists, and in displaying this distrust one displays his bias. For it is certain that an investigation which has for its major premise the incorrectness of the Biblical portrait of Jesus will find for its results anything but that Biblical portrait. "It will scarcely do, first to construct 'a priori' a Jesus to our own liking, and then to discard as 'unhistorical' all in the New Testament transmission which would be unnatural to such a Jesus."<sup>3</sup> Yet

(1) The Lord of Glory, p. 150. N.B., Perhaps it is from his feeling of urgency that Warfield has here made this broad statement. While there is certainly truth in it we still insist and (for purposes of our investigation) shall proceed on the basis that the movement was also an honest quest after the historical, human Jesus. Cf. D.M.Baillie's argument God Was in Christ, p. 31.

(2) "Princeton Theological Review," vol. I, p.648.

(3) Biblical Doctrines, p. 156.

this is exactly what P. W. Schmeidel, for instance, attempted to do<sup>1</sup> by picking out passages in the New Testament which are in direct opposition to the "deification" process and show therefrom an exclusively human Jesus. The existence of these passages in the New Testament is explained as a residue from an earlier tradition not having been weeded out by the worshippers of Jesus. Since these passages portray Jesus as a man and not God, then they must represent the early and true picture of Jesus still peeping through the accretions made by his worshippers.

Over against this, Warfield insisted that instead of two portraits of Jesus existing in the New Testament, one early and the other late, there exists actually only one; and in that one Jesus is truly a man and at the same time God.<sup>2</sup> It is only with a presupposition against the doctrine of two natures of Christ that any conflict is seen in the Biblical data.<sup>3</sup> It is strange too that, if this conflict in testimony is the true state of affairs, the Biblical writers themselves should have remained ignorant of it, especially men with the thoroughness of Luke and Paul.<sup>4</sup>

Underlying all such criticism is the notion that faith is the foe of fact. We have in the Scriptures not an objective account of the person of Jesus but a loving account, one that had been distorted by the emotions of worship and faith. If we are to see the bald truth about Him we must go behind the Gospel account. To all such criticism Warfield wished to address two "embarrassing questions":

(1) Article "Gospels" in the Encyclopaedia Biblica, 1901. Cf. Christology and Criticism, pp. 181-255.

(2) Christology and Criticism, p. 244.

(3) Cf. J.S. Lawton in Conflict in Christology, "The Fathers were just as familiar with the Gospel evidences of Christ's human limitations as any liberal scholar: the determinate factor was not a critical one, it was a philosophical one - the humanistic predilection against the miraculous - that was the principle involved." p. 52.

(4) Christology and Criticism, pp. 231-232.



(1) "Why should we not trust the evangelists' report of Jesus' teaching as to His own nature? And distrusting them how are we to get behind their report?"<sup>1</sup>

(2) The Evangelists loved and worshipped Jesus but is this an absolutely compelling reason why their report should not be trusted? Assume for the sake of argument that Jesus was all that He claims in the accounts to be. "How does it throw doubt on that fact that those who report it to us were led - possibly by overwhelming evidence of its truth - to believe that in so asserting He spoke truly?"<sup>2</sup>

As long as this remains a possibility, the search for any other Jesus must have as its basis merely an a priori assumption.

Essentially this same false canon was employed by those who criticised the New Testament Jesus on an ethical basis. To take any element of historic Christianity and pronounce it unchristian is highly illogical since it is only by the investigation of historic Christianity that we determine what Christianity is. To assume that Christianity is moral and rational and then go to the doctrines of the early Church with one's own standard of morality and rationality, branding as 'unchristian' all that does not fit these standards, is to reason in a vicious circle.<sup>3</sup> Yet this is just what is done by those who see un-Christlike things in the New Testament Christ.

(1) The Lord of Glory, p. 145.

(2) Ibid.

(3) This is the gist of Warfield's argument against D.C. Mackintosh who sought to gather from the "older" "historic" Christianity the "essence of Christianity." Cf. Christology and Criticism, pp. 393-444.

Not only were false canons of criticism adopted but in all too many instances they were not pushed to their logical conclusions. Had they been, the results would have been so radical that even the liberal would have had to disown his children. H. Weinel, for example, had much to say of the greatness of Paul as a man so noble that it would be impossible to neglect him or fail to admire and love him.<sup>1</sup> Yet while bidding us to admire and love him Weinel disregards and even despises his teaching and his testimony to the divine origin, and authority and value of that teaching. To Warfield there seemed to be an inner contradiction displayed here as he asked "whether we must not ultimately take our place by Nietzsche and curse him (Paul), or else with the whole Christian world and bless him?"<sup>2</sup>

The appearance of Kalthoff's astonishing books Das Christusproblem and Die Entstehung des Christentums occasioned Bousset's Jesus and Was wissen wir von Jesus. Kalthoff contended that criticism left itself no materials for forming a residual conception of Jesus and proceeded to obliterate entirely the figure of Jesus from history. Warfield did not even bother to take pen in hand to answer Kalthoff and viewed Bousset's assuming the role of "conservative apologist" as almost amusing. Actually he thought the positive aspect of Bousset's work very good. In it was recounted the fact that profane history itself assures us that Christianity already existed in the Roman Empire in numbers sufficient to attract the attention of the governing body at a period only some ten or twenty years removed from the traditional date of the death of Christ, which fact itself renders the non-historicity of Jesus exceedingly difficult to maintain. Bousset insisted

(1) St. Paul, The Man and His Work.

(2) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. VI., p. 128.

also that Paul's testimony put wholly beyond dispute not only the existence of Jesus but also the main outlines of His life. In addition there is the Evangelical literature which, though quite independent of Paul, still presents the same portrait of Jesus. Bousset labeled as "hyper-criticism" the refusal to derive historical facts from John's Gospel. In short, Bousset allows that Paul and the Evangelists are at one in their testimony as to who and what Jesus was and what he came to do. Warfield lamented, "And yet Professor Bousset refused to accept this testimony."<sup>1</sup> He appealed to the New Testament in establishing the historicity of Jesus and then set it aside when it pleased him while constructing his own view of the historical Jesus. "And when we ask after the grounds of the remarkable proceeding we get really nothing but a platitude about 'faith being the foe of history', - and the impossibility of one seeing clearly who believes and honours!"<sup>2</sup>

Actually Kalthoff's position commended itself to Warfield as a more logical one than that of Bousset,<sup>3</sup> for Kalthoff thought it absurd to find the essence and origin of such a movement as Christianity in a historical Jesus; it was rather a particular culture-phenomenon and a development-form of communal life. Bousset, on the other hand, spoke of his 'historical Jesus' as the specific point from which the movement sprang. For Warfield, however, Bousset's construction of Jesus was a figure too small to account for the movement of Christianity and the time too short to allow for development. No wonder Bousset wrote so promptly and vigorously, reasoned Warfield, for Kalthoff had taken the same critical route and simply followed

(1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. VI, p. 133.

(2) Ibid., p. 133.

(3) Prof. Wm. Childs Robinson has pointed out another 'strange alliance' between Warfield and the extremely radical critics. They both aligned themselves against Bousset in their exegesis of Rm. 9:5 (that Paul ascribes "God over all blessed forever" to Christ) the difference between Warfield and Kalthoff being that Warfield accepted Paul's view, (Our Lord, p. 117).

it to its logical end - the non-existence of Jesus. Warfield closed his review of Bousset's work with this trenchant observation:

"Faith is the foe of history we are told; therefore no more faith. Let us answer that unbelief is much more the foe of history. If it is a priori conceivable that the Evangelists, writing in the first generation of Christians and in the presence of men who had known our Lord, may have transformed the true tradition to meet the demands of their growing faith; it is a posteriori certain that our modern critics, writing two thousand years later, and in the presence of prevailing unbelief - unbelief in the supernatural and all that the supernatural stands for - out of an ignorance created by the rejection of all authentic records, - have transformed the true tradition to meet the demands of modern scepticism. Take the Gospel of Mark and place by the side of it the Gospel of Bousset and even on internal grounds we shall not hesitate to choose the former and reject the latter. And if we ask for external proof it is merely a conflict between abounding testimony and pure subjectivity."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield saw Arthur Drews' assault on the historicity of Jesus in the same light as he did that of Kalthoff. 'Liberal' theologians could not ignore it, for here their own method was employed with drastic results. Had they simply not carried their argument far enough? The burden of proof was upon their shoulders. They must refute the views of Drews or accept the verdict of reductio ad absurdum upon their own works. Johannes Weiss, in playing the unwanted role of apologist against Drews' Die Christusmythe, established some sound principles of historical criticism,<sup>2</sup> doing away with pre-conceived sceptical notions and the like, only to forsake them utterly by attempting to wrest from the New Testament an earlier view of Christ. He refuses Paul his words of ascription of deity to Jesus in Romans 9:5 on no other grounds than that it is "inconceivable" in Paul's mouth, meaning, said Warfield, it is discordant with Weiss' theory of what Paul ought to have said.<sup>3</sup> To be consistent Weiss should have gone all the way with Drews, Kalthoff, and Jensen.

(1) Warfield, op. cit., p. 136.

(2) Jesus von Nazareth, 1910; and Die Geschichtlichkeit Jesu, published jointly by J. Weiss and G. Grätzmacher, 1910. Cf. Warfield, Critical Reviews, pp. 266ff.

(3) Op. cit., p. 275.



Why postulate the feeble figure of a human Jesus behind the earliest documentary evidence. The mythological "humanized God" of Drews seemed to Warfield a much more plausible position for the naturalistically minded Weiss to have taken, especially since he already held that there existed before Jesus a doctrine of the Messiah and at least the materials for a Christology. The result would have been the view of "Kalthoff or Drews or Jensen except with a little higher scholarship and a little more reasonable mode of picturing the origin and growth of the Christ-myth."<sup>1</sup>

The logic of the thoroughgoing mythological school is commended by Warfield in more places than one. He reasoned that if the Jesus of the liberal critics is the real Jesus then He is truly a "useless figure, the assumption of which is so far from accounting for the great religious movement which we call Christianity, that it is certain that the movement did not arise in Him and did not derive its fundamental convictions from Him."<sup>2</sup> One gets the impression from the reading of Warfield's reviews of the historical critics that he considered this position the most difficult to refute. There was never any need to attempt it however, since Weiss, Bousset and their colleagues rushed forward to the task. Kalthoff and Drews did this service to Warfield: they established that there was no merely human Jesus behind the movement of Christianity. This was at once the reductio ad absurdum of David Friedrich Strauss and the vindication, on the grounds of Weiss, of the Jesus of the Evangelists.<sup>3</sup>

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(1) Critical Reviews, p. 274.

(2) The Lord of Glory, p. 119.

(3) Critical Reviews, pp. 302-303.

There were those critics who adopted an essentially sound basis for criticism but did not follow it through logically, to Warfield's way of thinking. Troeltsch argued back to the existence of the historical Jesus from the standpoint of the existence and life of the Christian community.<sup>1</sup> He maintained that no mere system of thought could have produced the Christian "cultus". It would be a "monstrous thing" to insist that Christianity could have come into being without a Christ. To the general line of argument, Warfield agreed, but in reference to the specific conclusions that Troeltsch made concerning the person of Christ he said, "We wish we could hear him go on and declare that doubt of the true deity of Jesus is also a monstrous thing, and denial of His great atoning act a gross absurdity. Were his opinions determined by purely historical considerations, he could so declare..."<sup>2</sup>

There were others who proceeded along this same line of argument; Von D. Eberhard Vischer, to mention only one more, took the cause and effect argument and insisted that from the effects of Jesus in history we are forced to the certainty of His existence, not the mere probability of it, just as the existence of the Divina Comedia demands the existence of a Dante.<sup>3</sup> Warfield could not criticize the use of this method since he had used the same himself. He did not see, however, why Vischer should not have deduced something of the character of Jesus as well as His simple existence. "How, after his survey of those effects, he can still recommend us to see in Jesus merely a man is a standing wonder."<sup>4</sup> To the objection that this is dictated by scientific criticism Warfield replied,

"No criticism of the sources can be sound which eliminates from them

(1) Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu für den Glauben, 1911.

(2) Critical Reviews, p. 295.

(3) Jesus Christus in der Geschichte, 1912.

(4) Warfield, op. cit., p. 300.

the Jesus which corresponds to the effects which He has wrought in the world; for it is undeniable that the Jesus who lies on the face of the sources is the very Jesus who appears in these effects."<sup>1</sup> "The real mystery," says Warfield somewhat sarcastically, is "not the rise of the Divine Jesus in the consciousness of His first followers, but the fading of the Divine Jesus out of the consciousness of so many of His late followers."<sup>2</sup>

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Assume, for the sake of argument, the truthfulness of the findings of early twentieth century criticism and see where it leaves you. This is the method by which Warfield made his most strenuous attacks on the movement. From his orthodox standpoint the forces were pressing in first, on the fact of divine revelation, and second, as a consequent to it, on the doctrine of the person of Christ. As we have said, Warfield looked upon the Christian faith as a complete, almost living, unit. No one aspect of it could be impaired or removed without doing damage to the whole. It was almost as though it were a mighty electric circuit in which a small break at any point could ruin the whole thing. The doctrine of the person of Christ was certainly such a point. Warfield's extreme vigour in defending the Chalcedonian doctrine of the Two Natures is amazing, almost puzzling, until we realize that it was not merely this doctrine per se which he was defending, but rather the whole matter of redemption. For him, the significance of the person of Christ, far from being exhausted in the neat Two-Nature formulation, is only truly seen when we come to the Atonement. Thoroughly Calvinistic and Anselmic here, the Atonement without the God-man Jesus Christ would crumble to the ground like an arch with the keystone removed. Thus he could speak to Troeltsch of "how non-sensical the raising of the question whether the historicity of Christ is indispensable to Christianity is," and

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(1) Ibid., p. 300.

(2) Ibid., p. 301.

chide him for not understanding

"that a Christianity which knows nothing of a divine Christ or of an Atoning Death of Christ is just not Christianity at all. The question of the indispensability of Christ to Christianity is in a word just the question of the nature, or, as it is now fashionable to phrase it, 'the essence' of Christianity. A Christless Christianity is no more a contradiction in words than a non-atoning Christ is a contradiction in fact; Christianity involves the acknowledgement not of Christ simpliciter but, as Paul insists, specifically of Christ as 'crucified'."<sup>1</sup>

When men set themselves in judgment over the Bible rather than submitting themselves in obedience to it - when this is done, for Warfield, the fact of Divine Revelation has been denied. When the Bible is viewed as simply a record of man's groping after God rather than God's seeking after man, when it is made a text book of psychology rather than a manual for theology, then one of the distinctive aspects of Christianity has been done away with. Warfield did not have to reason out his argument here for there were those who quite unambiguously would have Christendom exchange "the thought of a special revelation of God to His people, for that of the great history of religion throughout all humanity."<sup>2</sup> How can we then retain the name of Christianity, replied Warfield, "a name which, up to today, has been reserved not for universal religion, but for the very specific form of revealed religion indeed?"<sup>3</sup>

Warfield contended that the rationalistic critics were reducing Christianity to a natural religion. He argued after this manner. If the counsels of the anti-supernaturalistic critics

"are to prevail in the Christian Church, the Church must learn how to get along without 'Scriptures'. And this means, after the counsels of this criticism itself, that it must learn to get along without history. It must learn to find the birth and death, the resurrection and the ascension, of Christ matters of indifference. And this means ultimately that it must learn to get along without that positive element that alone makes the

(1) Critical Reviews, p. 295.

(2) H. Weinel, quoted by Warfield in "Princeton Theological Review," vol. VI, p. 129.

(3) Ibid., p. 129.



religion it professes distinctively Christian. And this means that it must get along with a purely natural religion." The issue which is raised is distinctly "the issue between a positive historical religion called Christianity, rooted in facts of Divine dealing with men, and a merely natural religion rooted in the functioning of the universal religious nature with which men as men are endowed."<sup>1</sup>

Essentially Warfield's plea then, is not to the effect that we should do away with historical criticism but that it should be carried on without the bias against the supernatural.<sup>2</sup>

The quest for the historical Jesus in the sense in which Albert Schweitzer intended was, for Warfield, but an assault upon the New Testament portrait of Jesus the groundlessness of which was only matched by its lack of results.<sup>3</sup> He could not help but feel "a certain sympathy with the position assumed by those writers who frankly admit that, the evangelical portraiture of Jesus being distrusted, the real Jesus is hopelessly lost to our sight."<sup>4</sup>

#### The Jesus of History in Warfield's own thought

As we have seen, Warfield rejects the question "Jesus or Christ?" as being a false alternative and insists that the Christ of the creeds and of the faith of the Church is expressly the person who walked the dusty roads of Galilee. On the basis of this, then, it might be thought impossible to approach Warfield's works with the question, "What concern did he show with the figure of the historical Jesus?" and get any intelligent answer; but this is not so.

In 1910 Warfield, writing in the new Schaff-Herzog encyclopedia,<sup>5</sup> displayed

(1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. I, p. 650.

(2) Cf. Principal Raymond Abba in reference to the "New Synthesis" (after Liberalism and Fundamentalism), "Critical inquiry, freed from Liberal presuppositions, needs to be relentlessly pursued with all the resources at our disposal." "Scottish Journal of Theology", vol. IV, p. 234.

(3) It seems to us that Schweitzer himself as much as admits this and resorts to the position that after all it is "Jesus as spiritually arisen within men who is significant for our time and can help it. Not the historical Jesus, but the spirit that goes forth from Him and in the spirits of men strives for new influence and rule, is that which overcomes the world." The Quest for the Historical Jesus, p. 399.

(4) The Lord of Glory, p. 148.

(5) Article "Jesus Christ", vi. pp. 150-160.

a keen interest in the "historical Jesus". He begins his treatment with a consideration of the well known passages from the secular historians, Suetonius, Tacitus, and Pliny as well as the questionable passages from Josephus. Moving on to the writings of Paul, the earliest Christian documents, Warfield maintains that the lack of emphasis on Jesus as a historical personage evidenced here is due neither to lack of Paul's information nor his concern. At the time of the writing of Paul's epistles, knowledge of the historical Jesus was the universal possession of Christians. When Paul refers to aspects or details of Jesus' life or teaching it is done not as though some new or fresh bits of information were being set forth but rather as though the facts were common knowledge. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor" (II Cor. 8:9), and "Ye ought... to remember the words of the Lord Jesus when he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).<sup>1</sup>

The inevitable need for the Gospels arose as soon as this common knowledge began to die out, but from our standpoint we must renounce the task of constructing a psychological biography of Jesus. The many 'lives of Jesus' were doomed to failure because of the lack of data for that particular purpose. It is not only possible, however, but "eminently worthwhile" to outline a life of Jesus giving a consistent view of His public ministry. This Warfield does but with a result that might well be disappointing if one is expecting anything akin to the nineteenth century "Lives" or even a harmony of the Gospels from the conservative standpoint. In point of fact, it seems as though

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(1) The Lord of Glory, pp. 203-204; Christology and Criticism, p. 152.

Warfield has refused to write a conservative 'Life of Jesus'.<sup>1</sup> For him the "Natural" Christ of the "Lives" was a man subject to his times not the molder of it.<sup>2</sup> If He was the molder of His times and indeed the history of the world to follow, it is doubtful whether He can be 'portrayed' at all. This is not to say that in his own thought Warfield did not make use of the 'historical Jesus'.

He pointed out that in the New Testament 'Jesus' is only the narrative name of our Lord while 'Christ' and its compounds, together with 'Lord', the didactic names. "Already in Paul the simple 'Jesus' has retired into the background, and the simple 'Christ' together with the compounds of 'Christ' has taken its place."<sup>3</sup> Far from indicating any change or development of usage, this fact is merely in keeping with the type of literature. "Christians were from the beginning accustomed to speak of Jesus as 'Christ', 'Lord', whenever they were not merely recounting His deeds in the flesh."<sup>4</sup>

Allowing Warfield the definition of terms, i.e. Jesus of history refers to Him as concerning His deeds in the flesh, we find a great deal in answer to our question, "What concern did he show to the figure of the historical Jesus?"

First, the Jesus of history is necessary for faith. While the primary item in the fact of the universal and uniform belief in our Lord's deity which characterized the first age of the Church is to be found in His own self-

(1) "Presbyterian and Reformed Review", vol. 10, p. 716. Warfield seems to indicate that there is an even greater difficulty in the very nature of the case. The mental history of a dog would be impossible for a human <sup>being</sup> to record because of the immense difference in the workings of the two minds. How much greater would this same difficulty be when the biographer is looking upward to God incarnate?

(2) "We are reminded of Renan's declaration that the trouble with biographies is that the biographer invariably imputes himself to his victim and will not permit him to think or act except within his own limits of thought." Warfield, loc. cit.

(3) A. Harnack, *The History of Dogma*, p. 181, quoted approvingly by Warfield, *The Lord of Glory*, p. 221.

(4) Warfield, *op. cit.*, p. 221 (note). *Ibid*, p. 221 (note).

assertion, there must certainly have been more evidence than assertion alone.

"Men do not without ado believe every one who announces himself to be God, upon the bald announcement alone. There must have been attendant circumstances which supported the announcement and gave it verisimilitude - nay, cogency - or it would not have had such power over men. Our Lord's life, His teachings, His character, must have been consonant with it. His deeds as well as His words must have borne Him witness. The credit accorded to His assertion is the best possible evidence that such was the case. We can understand how His followers could believe Him divine, if in point of fact He not only asserted Himself to be divine but lived as became a God, taught as befitted a divine Instructor, in all His conversation in the world manifested a perfection such as obviously was not human: and if dying, He rose again from the dead."<sup>1</sup>

If He did none of these things can that primitive faith, that "firm and passionate faith in His deity" be explained?

Haering had remarked that it is "all over with faith if it can be shown that Jesus is only a creation of faith."<sup>2</sup> Warfield went a step further than this in maintaining that faith, even to exist, requires the historicity of Jesus for its validity; that is to say, even a neutral position by history, neither affirming nor denying the reality of the New Testament Jesus, would be fatal to faith. "If we deny that history is capable of making the existence of such a character certain, do we not in that very act deny that it is capable of making His non-existence certain? And is not the upshot simply then, that history cannot give any certainty in any such matter at all; and our actual conviction with respect to it, whether positive or negative - must rest upon and be the product of our own subjectivity?"<sup>3</sup> This would amount to little more than a Ritschlian value-judgment which was by no means what Warfield conceived faith to be.

(1) Ibid., p. 275.

(2) The Christian Faith: A System of Dogmatics, p. 217; cf. Critical Reviews, p. 111.

(3) Critical Reviews, p. 115.



Second, the Jesus of history is necessary to explain Jesus, Christianity, and world history. Any denial of the historicity of the Jesus we see in the New Testament runs into more difficulties than it evades. Admit that this was the real Jesus and everything falls orderly into place. "Deny it, and you have a Jesus and a Christianity on your hands both equally unaccountable. And this is as much as to say that the ultimate proof of the deity of Christ is just - Jesus and Christianity."<sup>1</sup> Anything else and we would have a very different Jesus and a very different Christianity. "We need the Jesus of history to account for the Christianity of history." And what is more we need the Jesus of history and the Christianity of history to account for the history of the world. "...To be rid of this Jesus we must be rid of this Christianity, and to be rid of this Christianity we must be rid of the world history which has grown out of it. We must have the Christianity and the Jesus of history or we leave the world that exists, as it exists, unaccounted for."<sup>2</sup>

Third, the Jesus of history serves as a true revelation of man. Not only is the historical Jesus very God and therefore a true revelation of God, but also true man and therefore a "revelation of man". The writer of the book of Hebrews in the second chapter (verses 7,8) is quoting the psalmist (Ps.8:4-6) who extols man as God's creation. The writer of Hebrews seems to falter at the conclusion of his quotation, "But now we see not yet all things put under him," as if to say that man is now dominated by some things that he should be dominating. His line of reasoning picks up though in the words, "But we see

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(1) The Lord of Glory, p. 278; cf. Christology and Criticism, pp.303, 337, 359.

(2) The Lord of Glory, p. 278.

Jesus." These words, says Warfield, refer to the historical Jesus in whom we see what man was intended to be by his Creator and what man will be like when God's salvation is finally complete. For in the Incarnation, Christ did not "assume merely the appearance of man, but the reality of humanity..." He was "possessed of every faculty and capacity that belongs to the essence of our nature: as a veritable 'son of man', born of woman, and brother to all those He came to succor."<sup>1</sup>

As a revelation of man, the Jesus of history becomes the Christian's perfect example. It was in the historical person of Jesus that God worked His great work of reconciliation. It was in the historical person of Jesus that God confronted man with a perfect revelation of Himself and an example for those who would take up their cross and follow Him. Next to one's redemption in Christ, the most stirring thing that can come to his heart is the example of the life of Christ -- "living legislation in a perfect humanity."<sup>2</sup> It is the example of One who was led by His love for others into the world, to forget Himself in the needs of others, to sacrifice self once for all upon the altar of sympathy. Self-sacrifice brought Christ into the world. And self-sacrifice will lead us, His followers, not away from but into the midst of men.

"Wherever men suffer, there will we be to comfort. Wherever men strive, there will we be to help. Wherever men fail, there will we be to uplift. Wherever men succeed, there will we be to rejoice. Self-sacrifice means not indifference to our times and our fellows: it means absorption in them. It means forgetfulness of self in others. It means entering into every man's hopes and fears, longings and despairs....Only when we humbly walk this path, seeking truly in it not our own things but those of others,

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(1) The Power of God unto Salvation, p.11.

(2) Saviour of the World, p. 247.

we shall find the promise true, that he who loses his life shall find it. Only, when, like Christ, and in loving obedience to His call and example, we take no account of ourselves, but freely give ourselves to others, we shall find, each in his measure, the saying true of himself also: 'Wherefore also God hath highly exalted him.' The path of self-sacrifice is the path of glory."<sup>1</sup>

This is as fine an example of Warfield's use of the historical Jesus as we could find. Even in this sermon passage, which is more hortatory than theologically didactic, the 'Christ' he has in mind is the God-man who was just as 'historical' as anyone else who ever lived on earth. In this particular sermon the very fact that Jesus Christ was the unique Son of God is utilized by Warfield to intensify the impact of the exemplary aspect.

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The 'modern man' of the nineteenth century moved in a cultural environment which included many scientific postulates — the theory of evolution for instance — which made it impossible for him to embrace the Christ of the orthodox doctrine. The critics taking part in the Jesus of History movement then proceeded from the standpoint of the 'modern man' to criticize the orthodox presentation of the Gospel with the desired result ensuing, to wit, a gospel which he could accept. This is not the whole story, of course, for these men were themselves 'modern men' and from their standpoint they were waging a battle against an unjustifiable wrong. Nevertheless even in the most radical of them one can catch a glimpse of some praiseworthy inner motive, namely, the good of the men of their time and in some weird sense, the good of Christ.

Why did not Warfield follow them, if not in their extreme conclusions,

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(1) The Saviour of the World, pp.269-270.

at least in some such way as to make the Gospel less difficult for the modern age? The first and most obvious reason is to be seen in Warfield's whole conception of the sin of man and the salvation of God. To alter the doctrine of Christ would be to impair, if not make void altogether, salvation itself. As to the "modern mind", "there is after all but one "mind" to be considered, and this is the human mind; and the human mind is much the same in modern times as it has always been ..."<sup>1</sup> It is sinful and can no more successfully hide from that fact now than at any other time in history.

In addition to this primary reason there undoubtedly existed a secondary one stemming from Warfield's epistemological approach to Christianity. We refer not to his doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible, -- the implications of which are obvious -- but to the general view of the knowledge of God which he held. There are the objective and subjective aspects to be considered. In the subjective aspect Warfield has reference to the matter of our sin-bred blindness, a difficulty which is overcome in the noetic effects of regeneration; while in the objective he refers to the object of faith. Furthermore, the object must not merely "be there" but must be perceived by the mind in such a manner as to be convincing.<sup>2</sup> It might be said that the Jesus of history formed for Warfield the argumentum propter quod credo for faith. He did not reject the most fundamental principle of criticism, viz., that we must think rationally in such matters, but rather insisted that such criticism should be carried on without any bias against the supernatural. He protested, "it is not a bad way -- among

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(1) Critical Reviews, p.103.

(2) "Princeton Theological Review," vol.I, p.143.



others — of determining what is possible to observe what is actual."<sup>1</sup>

If we may be allowed to view Warfield for a moment against the background of present theological thought, his position on the Jesus of history question finds a very precise vindication in the work of the Scottish theologian, D.M. Baillie,<sup>2</sup> who argues that the Jesus of history has an essential role to play in the matter of faith, and even of salvation since God saves by revealing Himself to us.<sup>3</sup> Certain thinkers whose names are associated with the Theology of the Word, notably Emil Brunner, contribute in a secondary way to this vindication, though mainly by way of exhibiting a trend. Brunner in the first edition of Der Mittler in 1927 certainly does not show much interest in the Jesus of history, for which fact he is criticized by Professor Baillie. Evidently this criticism was deemed a just one for Brunner has since modified his position.

"In point of fact, the Jesus of whom, after the process of critical examination has been achieved, it can be said: this is the historical Jesus, is the same as the One whom the Apostles call the Christ, the Kyrios, the Son of God, the Incarnate Word of God."<sup>5</sup>

This is very nearly the same view as set forth by D.M. Baillie, and in its main contention the precise view which Warfield propounded at the turn of the century.

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- (1) Christology and Criticism, p.254.
  - (2) God Was in Christ, especially the section entitled, "Can We Dispense with the Jesus of History?" pp.48-54.
  - (3) Ibid., p.49.
  - (4) Ibid., pp.34-35.
  - (5) The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, p.245.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## THE KENOSIS THEORY

Another emphasis felt in the theology of Dr. Warfield's period which forced him to express his Christology very precisely at certain points was the Kenosis theory. It is not necessary for our purpose to set down in any detail what the Kenosis theory is, but rather to view Warfield's thought in relation to the various issues which emerged. Indeed it would be difficult to put forth a detailed Christology and call it the Kenosis Christology, for from the first systemization given it by Thomasius in 1845<sup>1</sup> and the reckless, unguarded statements of Gess<sup>2</sup> to the refined treatment of P. T. Forsyth in 1909<sup>3</sup> and H. R. Mackintosh,<sup>4</sup> a great variety is seen. The pioneers and most radical advocates of modern Kenoticism<sup>5</sup> were continental theologians. Beckworth remarks, in a rather derogatory sounding statement, "English and American theories of Kenosis are scarcely more than reproductions of German speculations of the same subject ..."<sup>6</sup> Strictly a movement within the confines of confessional orthodoxy, it exerted tremendous influence so that even as late as 1938 we have the statement, "I should think it probable that a majority today of those among us who have a Christology which they are prepared to defend are still Kenoticists."<sup>7</sup> J. M. Creed continues by saying that A. B. Bruce, though critical of the theory, yet in his own Christology shows its influence; and William Temple, too, who in Christus Veritas forcibly criticises the Kenosis theory

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(1) Most permanent work, Christi Person und Werk, 1853-61. A.B. Bruce says König anticipated Thomasius but did not give his views systematic treatment.

(2) Lehre von der Person Christi, 1856.

(3) The Person and Place of Jesus Christ.

(4) The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, 1912.

(5) i.e. From Thomasius on. Most authorities see Zinzendorf as forerunner.

(6) The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, vol. IV, p.319.

(7) The Divinity of Jesus Christ, J.M. Creed, p.75.

from the standpoint of theology proper, yet presents, in his own construction of the doctrine of Christ's Person a view which appears to some "to presuppose that Kenotic principle which on theological grounds has been repudiated."<sup>1</sup> Likewise Princip Duthie, in reviewing D.M. Baillie's work, God Was in Christ, claims that though Professor Baillie has criticized the Kenosis doctrine he appears to have ended up with a form of Kenosis which is, in a way, "even more thoroughgoing."<sup>2</sup>

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Deriving its name from the ἐκένωσεν of Paul's famous Philippian passage (2:5-11), the theory maintains that the Logos set aside the "form of God" and assumed the "form of a servant". The "form of God" is described variously, but generally held to mean that aspect of God in which he was omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. For Gess the emptying of the "form of God" meant a complete obliteration of all divine consciousness and a loss of non posse peccare, while in Forsyth the emptying of these attributes meant a reduction of them to the realm of "potentiality". In order to lay a foundation for their Christological construction and also to escape the charge of Apollinarianism the Kenoticists had first to make a distinction in the attributes of God. Omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence were variously termed external,<sup>3</sup> physical,<sup>4</sup> relative,<sup>5</sup> applied,<sup>6</sup> cosmic,<sup>7</sup> and logical<sup>8</sup> attributes while others

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(1) Ibid., p.75.

(2) In a class lecture given at New College, Edinburgh, winter quarter, 1951.

(3) Fairbairn.

(4) Forsyth.

(5) Thomasius.

(6) Ebrard.

(7) Mackintosh.

(8) Wm. Temple.

such as love, holiness, and justice were given the corresponding designation - internal, ethical, essential, absolute, moral, etc. The Kenosis theory may have been precipitated by the various discoveries of Biblical criticism, i.e. Christ's mistaken opinion as to Old Testament authorship and the like, or may represent an attempt by modern orthodoxy to recover the unity of the Person of Christ, goaded on to do so by the infant science, Psychology. At any rate it seems fair to say that its main emphasis lay in (1) doing justice to the express statements in the New Testament concerning the limitations of Christ, (2) maintaining the unity of the Person of Christ, and (3) not denying the truthfulness of the historic creeds of the Church, especially the Nicene and Chalcedonian.

Of course all which Warfield wrote in opposition to the Kenoticists will not apply to every advocate of the theory. We shall present from his arguments not that which makes the best refutation of the Kenosis theory, but that in which his own Christological thought is most clearly revealed, beginning with an précis of his own exegesis of Philippians 2:6-8.

#### Philippians 2:6-8

ὁς : Apparently it is customary to dispense with the exegetical problem involved here by merely stating the antecedent of ὁς, the problem being simply whether it refers to the pre-existent Logos or the incarnate Theanthropos. The Lutherans usually take the former position and the Reformed divines the latter. This distinction was a little too neat for Warfield because after all it could not be allowed that the Logos and the Theanthropos are two different beings. The force of the Lutheran argument was appreciated, namely, that the Logos, being divine, was therefore immutable and not subject to exinanition. Nevertheless it was the Logos of God who, without being



subject to any examination by virtue of which He became other than He was, assumed human nature into personal union with Himself and in so doing thus performed "the greatest act of condescension that has ever taken place in God's universe, in the presence of which all further acts of humiliation, enormously beyond human comprehension as they are, yet necessarily take a subordinate place."<sup>1</sup> Thus the ὁς must refer to the Logos both in His pre-existent and incarnate states for Warfield saw in the passage not only a reference to the initial act of self-abnegation of the Logos in which He took the form of a servant, but also further acts of humility and obedience, even the death of the cross. The whole life of the Son of God on earth was one of kenosis in which the same frame of mind which made the Incarnation itself possible, was continually being exercised.<sup>2</sup>

ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ: This phrase "form of God" was taken by Warfield to mean simply "all that God is" and possessing "the whole fulness of attributes which make God God." In this whole passage Paul is not formally expounding the doctrine of the Person of Christ, but rather <sup>exhorting</sup> ~~making an exhortation to~~ his readers to unselfishness, the unselfishness in which we esteem others better than ourselves. Consequently "Paul does not say simply, 'He was God.' He says, 'He was in the form of God,' employing a term of speech which throws emphasis upon Our Lord's possession of the specific quality of God.. 'Form' is a term which expresses the sum of these characterizing qualities which make a thing the precise thing that it is."<sup>3</sup>

ὑπάρχων: Strictly, "to be beforehand", "to be ready", "to be there and ready". The word "intimates the existing circumstances, disposition of

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(1) "Princeton Theological Review," vol. 3, p. 165.

(2) Cf. "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol. 10, p. 708. Kenosis is to be understood metaphorically not as a literal emptying (see following discussion).

(3) Biblical Doctrines, p. 177. Cf. Christology and Criticism, p. 271. NB. Appendix to this chapter on "The Form of God".

mind, or, as here, mode of subsistence in which the action to be described takes place."<sup>1</sup> There is here no intimation of cessation of circumstances, disposition, or mode of subsistence. The imperfect tense in no way suggests that it came to an end in the action described by the succeeding verb.

"Paul is not telling us here, then, what Our Lord was once, but rather what He already was, or, better, what in His intrinsic nature He is; he is not describing a past mode of existence of Our Lord, before the action he is adducing as an example took place - although the mode of existence he describes was Our Lord's mode of existence before this action - so much as painting in the background upon which the action adduced may be thrown up into prominence. He is telling us who and what He is who did these things for us, that we may appreciate how great the things He did for us are."<sup>2</sup>

With this in mind, then, 'taking the form of a servant' was not a supersession of the 'form of God' but rather an addition to it.<sup>3</sup>

τὸ εἶναι ἰσα θεῷ: Apparently Warfield considered this phrase to be more or less in apposition with "form of God"<sup>4</sup> and accordingly disallowed it to be the indirect object of ἐκέκωσεν.<sup>5</sup> The reason is to be found however in the fact of the emphatic position of ἐαυτόν and the general usage of κενῶω.

ἐαυτόν ἐκέκωσεν: The pronoun here is in the emphatic position thus serving as a barrier "over which we cannot climb backwards in search of that of which

(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.178.

(2) Ibid., p.178. In 1899 Warfield commented ("Presbyterian and Reformed Review, vol.10, pp. 700ff.) that the most fruitful element in Gifford's exegesis of Phil. 2:5-11 was his emphasis on the neglected aspect of the participle ὑπαρχων which not only indicates what Christ was, but also what He continued to be. Gifford had maintained that the imperfect tense, contrasted with the following aorist, certainly pointed to indefinite continuance of being. Warfield's view which we here present was written in 1915 for the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, edited by James Orr, and is much more refined than Gifford's or than his own of 1899. The difference is simply that Gifford held that ὑπαρχων pointed to a continuation of being while Warfield held that it did not point to a cessation of being.

(3) The Lord of Glory, p. 227.

(4) A.B. Bruce equated the two, Humiliation of Christ, p. 22.

(5) So also Gifford, op.cit., p. 45.

Our Lord emptied Himself."<sup>1</sup> Thus Warfield refuses the question, "Of what did Our Lord empty himself?" altogether. κενόω is not always accompanied by a genitive of that of which the object is emptied. It is sometimes understood in terms of the object itself.<sup>2</sup> If ἐαυτόν and ἐκένωσεν are seen in contrast, as the emphatic position of ἐαυτόν seems to demand, then we should read not, "He EMPTIED Himself", but rather, "He emptied HIMSELF". Of what? Of just self.<sup>3</sup> What Our Lord actually did, according to Paul, is expressed in the following clauses; those now before us express more the moral character of His act.<sup>4</sup> He took the 'form of a servant', and so was 'made in the likeness of men'. But His doing this showed that "He did not set overwhelming store by His state of equality with God, and did not account Himself the sufficient object of all efforts. He was not self-regarding: He had regard for others. Thus He becomes our supreme example of self-abnegating conduct."<sup>5</sup> His action is one that we can imitate by not looking on our own things and by esteeming others better than ourselves. Warfield preferred the translation of the Authorized Version, "made Himself of no reputation," because it preserved the metaphorical sense in which ἐκένωσεν should here be taken. To say, "He emptied Himself," in the sense in which the Kenosis theory maintained, was to press an excessively literal rendering into the passage thus resurrecting the physical sense of the word in an unusual context.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore the ethical import of the passage is ruined by rendering ἐκένωσεν "emptied", for we are not called upon by this

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.181. Most commentators see in this emphatic position of ἐαυτόν an intimation of the willingness and voluntariness of Christ's action.

(2) Warfield cites Euripides' *Ion*, 447, where Zeus is spoken of as "making their temples void". Also the cross of Christ emptied in I Cor.1:17 and Paul's glorying in I Cor.9:15; II Cor.9:3, "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol.10, p.717.

(3) Ibid., p.718; Cf. Biblical Doctrines, p. 180.

(4) Biblical Doctrines, p. 181.

(5) Ibid., p. 181. Cf. The Lord of Glory, pp.227ff and "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol. 10, pp. 700ff.

(6) The Saviour of the World, p.255.

example to degrade ourselves but rather forget ourselves. It is not to self-effacement exactly, but to complete self-abnegation that we are called, an entire and ungrudging self-sacrifice even to death itself; not for the sake of the thing itself, but for the sake of others and for God.<sup>1</sup>

From his treatment of these key words it can be seen that Warfield took the passage not as a didactic portion, teaching the doctrine of Christ directly, but rather as an ethical exhortation which, nevertheless, displays a definite Christology in the form of implication by both Paul and the Philip-  
 pians. Thus Paul does not say simply, "He was God," but rather, "He was in the form of God," employing a term of speech which throws emphasis on Our Lord's possession of the specific quality of God. Likewise the term "form of a servant" has the same import, denoting the whole body of characteristics by which a servant is made what we know as a servant. Purpose and action are in the foreground but matters of being and substance underly the discussion, else it is meaningless; for the unselfishness which esteems others better than oneself is precisely that which was exemplified by Our Lord. Warfield gives the following paraphrase of the passage:

"He did not look upon His own things but the things of others; that is to say, He did not stand upon His own rights, but was willing to forego all that He might justly have claimed for Himself for the good of others. For ... as we all know, in His intrinsic nature He was nothing other than God, yet He did not, as we all know right well, look greedily on His condition of equality with God, but made no account of Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient up to death itself, and that, the death of the cross."<sup>2</sup>

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(1) The Saviour of the World, pp.268-270.

(2) This paraphrase of Phil. 2:5-8 found in Biblical Doctrines, p.176-177.



While the exegetical aspect of Kenotic discussions usually revolves about this famous passage in Philippians, it might be nearer the truth to say that the main foundation of the theory is to be seen in a certain construction of the overall phenomenon of Christ's life as it is presented in the Gospels. In utilizing the notion of Kenosis, theologians were attempting to do full justice to those passages in which Christ is presented as the subject of human growth and limitations. In this connection Warfield accused the Kenoticists of keeping their attention focused on the human nature of Christ to the extent of allowing themselves to assume that what is true of it is all that is true of Him. There remain for them three simple questions:

- (1) How much of Christ's life can be accounted for without the Kenosis theory?
- (2) How much of Christ's life can be accounted for with the Kenosis theory?
- (3) To what extent is the Kenosis conception in accord with that of Christ Himself and that of the Apostles?

To the first of these questions Warfield answered, 'All of it'; to the second, 'Only those portions which testify to His true humanity'; to the third, 'The conception is definitely not in agreement with that of the Apostles or of Christ Himself.'<sup>1</sup>

The Biblical testimony to the life of Christ is definitely a duplex one with the strands of deity and humanity clearly discernible throughout, and these strands are so closely woven at so many places that it is impossible to assume that we have two conflicting portraits of Christ,<sup>2</sup> but rather one unified portrait of a Christ whose life is "distinctly duplex". We see Him

(1) "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol. 10, p. 711.

(2) So Warfield argued against P. W. Schmiedel in 1913. "Princeton Theological Review", pp. 195ff.

dependent on God and yet announcing His great "I will"; He expresses ignorance, yet reads the hearts of men; He claims to know even as does the Father and accepts the attribute of omniscience,<sup>1</sup> yet is ignorant of a simple communicable fact as that of the date of His own second coming.<sup>2</sup> "There is but one principle of interpretation which will do justice to both series of facts," says Warfield. "It is the Church conception of the constitution of the Person of Christ as embracing in its unity two complete natures, united without conversion, without confusion, eternally and inseparably."<sup>3</sup> The trouble in the case of the Kenotic theologians was not a simple failure to see what was in the Gospels, but rather a lost grasp of the doctrine which in turn resulted in a marred conception of the God-man and a confounding of the whole record of His life, namely, oversimplifying the passages which demand acknowledgment of his humanity.

To attribute both aspects of this testimony (that which demands full deity and that which demands true humanity) to one nature is of course a logical impossibility; some sort of kenosis would be absolutely necessary. But to attribute them to two natures which are combined in one person is not illogical. In being unwilling to do the latter, one displays a lurking monophysitism. It was thus that Warfield accused the Kenotic theologians of a practical neglect of the doctrine of the Two Natures. The problem they attempted to solve only existed upon the supposition of a monophysite Christ. The spectacle they presented was an odd one to say the least; a group of men who acknowledged the doctrine of the Two Natures of Christ busying themselves with a theory which sought to bring everything Christ did and said into the harmony which

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(1) Presumably Warfield has in mind the post-resurrection ascription of Peter recorded in John 21:17, "Lord, thou knowest all things."

(2) In another place Warfield suggests that this fact may not be so 'simple' or 'communicable'. See following discussion on limitation.

(3) "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol. 10, p. 715.

would exist in a person with only one nature.<sup>1</sup> In reviewing Thomas Adamson's Studies in the Mind of Christ,<sup>2</sup> Warfield carries the application of the Chalcedonian formulation even to the point of denying the legitimacy of speaking of 'His mind' or 'His knowledge when He was on earth', "as if He had but one 'mind' and but one 'knowledge', and that was necessarily (because He was true man) purely human."<sup>3</sup>

Both the didactic portions of the New Testament<sup>4</sup> as well as the general picture of Jesus in the Synoptics indicate a continuance of the Logos with His full powers throughout His incarnate state. We are not presented with a Jesus who has laid aside His power or refused to draw upon the store of His divine knowledge. There was no change of the Logos at the time of His Incarnation in anything pertaining to His being, but rather a change in the circumstances or mode of His existence. "The life of the Son of God on earth was certainly a life of deliberate, persistent and constant self-restraint in the use of the Divine powers that abided in Him;<sup>5</sup> and therefore the Incarnation

(1) Of course from the standpoint of men like Mackintosh, Weston, Fairbairn, et.al, Warfield's dyophysite construction borders on Nestorianism.

(2) Adamson wrote Warfield after the publication of this review and protested against the treatment his book received. He had been falsely accused of holding the Kenosis theory, he claimed. Warfield published an apology for so construing his work but virtually maintained that Adamson's Studies implied a kenosis theory as a foundation, notwithstanding his protests to the contrary.

(3) "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol. 10, p. 172.

(4) John 1:1ff. and Phil. 2:5-10 in particular.

(5) Op.cit., p. 708. We discern in phrases like this the doctrine of Extra Calvinisticum in Warfield's thought, namely, "Since the Godhead cannot be comprehended and is everywhere present, it follows of necessity that it exists outside of (extra) the human nature which it assumed, but none the less abides within it and personally united with it." (Calvin's Catechism Q. 48). There seems to be very little emphasis in Warfield however, on Calvin's note, brought out strongly by Barth, (Die Kirchliche Dogmatik I, ii, p. 77-113 and Credo chapters 8 and 10) of the Incarnation as a veiling of God rather than a revelation. (Cf. Calvin's Comm. on Phil. 2:5-8). In Warfield the emphasis is largely on the Incarnation as a revelation of God and what "veiling" there was, was confined to that portion of Christ's life before His public ministry began.



was not in itself and its very principle a self-emptying act of the Logos, by which He immediately laid aside His Divine powers, "but a life of constant self-abnegation on the part of a God-man who retained the powers proper to Him as Deity, and persistently refused to use them in the work the Father had given Him to do."<sup>1</sup> Warfield strongly emphasises the continuity in the life of the Logos from pre-incarnate through incarnate and on to the ascended stage. The outcome of the whole matter is not that God turned into a man but that He took upon Himself true human nature in order that He might exalt it. The kenosis that is present must be understood in terms of the vast contrast and tension that our Lord experienced in living as a man in the conditions of this sinful world.

"So far is Paul from intimating, therefore, that Our Lord laid aside His Deity in entering upon His life on earth, that he rather asserts that He retained His Deity throughout His life on earth, and in the whole course of His humiliation, death itself, was consciously ever exercising self-abnegation, living a life which did not by nature belong to Him, which stood in fact in direct contradiction to the life which was naturally His."<sup>2</sup>

This continuity in the life of the Logos must be maintained if the eternity of Christ's human nature is true. The connection may seem remote, but Warfield raised the question: After Christ's exaltation when that which was emptied was once again restored, what then became of His true humanity? Has justice been done to the last of the four great adjectives of Chalcedon, "eternally" with reference to His humanity? No. What we are actually presented

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(1) Op.cit., p. 708. It must be remembered that underlying such statements in Warfield are certain doctrines of Covenant Theology. "There underlies Paul's statements not merely the conceptions which have found expression in the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation, but also those which have found expression in the doctrine of the Covenant of Redemption in accordance with which the Persons of the Godhead carry on each His own part of the work of redemption." (The Lord of Glory, p. 218).

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p.179. This quotation, apart from its context, could be easily misconstrued especially if an unwarranted technical meaning is attached to the word "nature". What Warfield actually had in mind when writing this passage was that form of the Kenosis theory which maintained that Incarnate Christ had no divine consciousness.



with in the Kenosis theory is not a Christ who exists forever in two natures but rather the second Person of the Trinity who 'shrunk' Himself down to the size of a man and then after the ascension returned to His normal 'size' thus leaving us with no man as our mediator. Paul could not say, "There is one mediator ... the man Christ Jesus," but would rather have to say, "There is one mediator, the second Person of the Trinity who remembers the time when He was a man."<sup>1</sup>

All the statements and implications found in the Gospels indicating Christ's ignorance, growth, and subordination to the Father — far from demanding the construction of a Kenosis theory — simply testify to the true humanity of Christ, which the Church has always maintained. The state of our Lord when He "took the form of a servant" was of course far inferior and subordinate to that of His Father. This state was the Son's according to the Covenant of Redemption and it was in reference to it that He said, "The Father is greater than I". As to His very being, however, His confession was, "I and the Father are one."<sup>2</sup>

In general, then, the Biblical statements concerning the manhood of Christ, Warfield simply took as a testimony to that nature of His person. The treatment of Mark 13:32 is of sufficient interest for us to note in particular, however. The problem involved in this confession of ignorance by our Lord of the time of the consummation of the age is not fully recognized either by the Kenoticists or their attackers. The former pass it off as just "typical of Christ's ignorance" or "another clear example ...", while latter too often have simply attributed this ignorance to the human nature of Christ. What troubled the Fathers in connection with this verse was not the bare fact of ignorance, but

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(1) Christology and Criticism, pp. 375-376.

(2) The Lord of Glory, pp. 181, 213-215.

rather what kind of ignorance it was. It is not something referring to the quid of God of which Christ is ignorant but a simple date of the occurrence of an event. Four reasons are suggested (all of which do not commend themselves);

(1) Christ's human mind simply too full of other facts to have this particular one in His consciousness.

(2) This fact was possibly connected with others which were beyond human understanding.

(3) There was possibly some mystery in this thing itself which made it beyond human understanding.

(4) It is possible that ignorance of this fact constituted part of the conditions of the mediatorial work.<sup>1</sup>

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To attribute ignorance to Christ was a far different matter from attributing a mistake to Him, either moral or intellectual. Warfield followed the view of Canon Liddon which has been almost universally rejected since. "The attempted distinction between a critical judgment of historical or philosophical facts, and a moral judgment of strictly spiritual and moral truths,

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(1) It was a foregone conclusion with Warfield that the Logos knew such a fact. In later years Warfield settled on this last reason as the probably true nature of the case. An ingenious discussion of this passage is to be found in Biblical Doctrines, pp. 201-202, with the conclusion, "When Our Lord says, then, that 'the Son knows not,' He becomes as express a witness to the two natures which constitute His person as Paul is when he speaks of the blood of God (Acts 20:28), or as Keble is a witness to the two fold constitution of a human being when he speaks of soul shedding blood. In this short sentence thus (Mark 13:32), Our Lord bears witness to His Divine nature with its supremacy above all creatures, to His human nature with its creaturely limitations, and to the unity of the subject possessed of these two natures." Cf. "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol. 10, pp. 722-723.

is inapplicable to a case in which the moral judgment is no less involved than the intellectual; and we have really to choose between the infallibility, moral no less than intellectual, of Jesus Christ our Lord on the one hand, and the conjectural speculations of critics, of whatever degree of critical eminence, on the other."<sup>1</sup> This issue came clearly into focus in some of the extreme forms of the Kenosis theory and also in the Jesus of History movement.<sup>2</sup> Warfield's view of the authority and the infallibility of Jesus certainly explains his view of the Scriptures. "The view we hold," he said, "is that of Jesus and the Apostles."<sup>3</sup> This is just another one of the many cords which bind Warfield's thought into a compact logical unity.

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In addition to the Biblico-dogmatic arguments, Warfield did not fail to bring against the Kenoticists those educible from the more metaphysical or pure theological standpoint. As we have observed, the constructors of the Kenosis theory felt it necessary, by way of preamble, to see a distinction in the attributes of God. This, Warfield argued, is entirely indefensible. We know that God is loving and merciful as well as omniscient and omnipotent, and, if knowing this, we ascribe deity to a being who possesses the former but not the latter set of attributes we have violated our concept of the immutability of God. For "God is ens simplicissimum, and of course, is as loving in His immutability as He is immutable in His love; and it is just as impossible for

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(1) Divinity of Our Lord, p. 479.

(2) In particular R. Roberts' article Jesus or Christ?, Hibbert Journal, 1909.

(3) Revelation and Inspiration, p. 74. Being as aware of all the findings of Biblical criticism as he was, Warfield must have experienced his own difficulties in maintaining this position. "It is not always easy," to take our stand by Our Lord and the Apostles on these matters but we know that it will always be the correct stand." *op. cit.* p. 74.

Him to be conceived as ceasing to be lovingly immutable as to be immutably loving." We cannot, on the plea that He is Love, demand that He shall cease to be God; the value of the love that He is rests on the fact that it is God (involving all that God is) that is this Love; and in proportion as we evacuate the Deity, with all that is involved in Deity, in the interest of the Love on which we lay our onesided emphasis, in that proportion we evacuate this love itself of all that gives it worth to us. "To escape from the impossibilities of this assumed Kenosis by demanding that we shall think of God, 'ontologically' as Love, and not, 'metaphysically' as immutable, is thus to cut off the limb on which we are sitting."<sup>1</sup>

We are given in theism the concept of God as the unchangeable One, which very concept forbids us to suppose that God could still be God after having been 'emptied.' We can accept the Kenosis theory only at the expense of giving up our theistic conception of God.

The very idea of a separation of attributes from essential being must inevitably spring from a philosophy of "old scholasticism". There is no such thing as an attributeless substance or bare being.<sup>2</sup> Things of this nature could be maintained only by the retention of a substantive philosophy which falls before the same criticism as does the doctrine of Transubstantiation.<sup>3</sup>

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(1) "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol. 10, p. 707.

(2) So also D.S. Schaff in The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, vol.III, p. 61, "It may be said, with Thomas Aquinas, that it was not the nature, but the person, of the Logos that became man. True, but a person without a nature is an impossible abstraction." So also Philip Schaff, "... attributes are not an outside appendix, they are inherent in the being itself and constitute it, so that a loss of all attributes (as in the teaching of Gess) is an annihilation, and the loss of some attributes (as Thomasius holds) is a mutilation of the being itself." (Christ and Christianity, p. 117).

(3) "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol. 10, p. 724. This likeness of the underlying philosophy of the Kenosis theory to the substantive thought supporting Transubstantiation thus expressly stated seems to be entirely original with Warfield. It is mentioned and enlarged upon by J.S. Lawton in Conflict in Christology (1949), p. 143.



For Principal Gore to write that, "it was necessary that He (Christ) should be without the exercise of such divine prerogatives as would have made human experience or progress impossible,"<sup>1</sup> is meaningless for we cannot talk of the possession of attributes apart from their usage. Can we conceive of one possessing omniscience, for instance, without his knowing all things?<sup>2</sup> "No will, however powerful, though swayed by almighty love itself, can possibly avail to close the eyes of an omniscience which yet remains in possession."<sup>3</sup>

No, the real scandalon was in the very Person of the dyophysite God-man to whom at once could be ascribed all the attributes of God as well as man. Should one object, as did Mackintosh, that a "two-fold personality ... is not merely something that we fail to understand; it is something we see quite well to be impossible,"<sup>4</sup> the reply will be that this does not seem nearly so bad as what is actually the case with many Kenoticists, namely, a posutlating of two spheres of existence for the Logos, one Trinitarian and the other Incarnate.<sup>5</sup>

(1) Hampton Lectures, 1891, p. 157.

(2) So also A.B. Bruce, "What can we understand by abstinence from the use of omniscience?" (Humiliation of Christ, p.103.)

(3) "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol. 10, p. 708. Though written ten years before, this sounds like a directed statement against P.T. Forsyth who in The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, sets forth the notion that the physical attributes were, during the incarnation, "reduced to potentiality". (p. 308). The self-emptying, or "self-retraction" as he preferred to call it, was postulated in order that the Logos might experience an evolutionary growth. (pp.308-309).

(4) The Person of Jesus Christ, p. 296. Further, "The doctrine of the Two Natures, if taken seriously, gives us two abstractions instead of one reality, two impotent halves in place of one living whole." (p.295).

(5) "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol. 10, p. 724. The theory as advanced by Mackintosh is that the Logos abandoned His cosmic functions. This construction seems particularly vulnerable from the standpoint of Wm. Temple's objection, "To say that the Creative Word was so self-emptied as to have no being except in the Infant Jesus, is to assert that for a certain period the history of the world was let loose from the control of the Creative Word". Christus Veritas, pp.142f, as cited by D.M. Baillie, God Was In Christ, p.96.

Furthermore if Christ is truly to reveal God to us how could this be done if He has laid aside some of God's attributes? What we would then have in Christ would not be a revelation of God Himself but rather of certain attributes of God - truths about God, not God.

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From the historical point of view, Warfield saw the Kenosis theory as an outcome of a long debasing process concerning the very conception of God. It took the pantheizing of the post-Kantian schools of German philosophy culminating in Hegel and a correspondingly degrading humanitarianism of the doctrine of the Person of Christ by Schleiermacher to break the ground for such a movement within orthodoxy as the Kenosis theory.

Doubtless the element of reaction was present, reaction against an over-emphasis on the Deity of Christ. A "deeper appreciation of the truth of His humanity" was needed but this did not call for another one-sided emphasis of an equally harmful nature. The truth in Christology was to be had only in a retention of the fact that "Our Lord possessed two complete natures in the unity of His person"<sup>1</sup> and it was the "besetting sin" of the Kenoticists that they were not able effectively to bear this in mind.<sup>2</sup>

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(1) "Presbyterian & Reformed Review", vol. 10, p. 707. Warfield quite evidently does not take the word "person" to mean a set of psychological functions but rather a principle of individualization, an ego.

(2) So also J. S. Lawton, "...the definition (of Christ's person) was assumed rather than formulated or discussed - which accounts for their (Kenoticists) amazing failure to comprehend the Christology of the past ages..." Conflict in Christology, p. 113. Brunner's criticism of the movement also was that they went astray in their preoccupation with a psychological approach. (So says J. M. Creed). However, D. M. Mackinnon remarks that the neo-orthodox make too easy an appeal to "the necessity of an ontological as distinct from a psychological approach" and "are in danger of denying to the event of Christ its unique significance and its universal embrace." "Scottish Journal of Theology", vol. I, p. 207.

There was the very cold and practical reason for the Kenosis theory, too. Old Testament investigation had brought scholars to a view of its authority and purpose that was quite different from the view of Jesus and the Apostles, and while Warfield did not put this down as a major reason he did say that here the theory "received a boost."

The theory is foreign to the historical faith of the Church<sup>1</sup> and even the present demands of the Christian heart remain unsatisfied for it must have a Christ it can trust not One Who was liable to all the errors of His age. The religious affections must gather around one, who though man as concerning the flesh, is nevertheless, at the same time, God over all blessed forever and consequently the same yesterday, today, and forever.

#### CONCLUSION

Doubtless the dyophysite view of the life of the Theanthropos was one of the main factors which drove theologians to attempt the various kenotic constructions, but in the solving of this difficulty Dr. Warfield makes absolutely no contribution at all. If we follow him we come right back to where we started with the only gain being the strong insistence that the route of the Kenosis is a false way out. In short Warfield claims that here, in the self-consciousness of Jesus, we stand before something into which man cannot penetrate. The only conception of Christ which enables a harmonious view of the New Testament data is that He is a person with a duplex life, divine and human.<sup>2</sup>

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(1) Friedrich Loofs, in summarizing the exegesis of the early Church finds considerable variations of interpretation of Phil. 2:6ff and yet a unanimity on the matter of Kenosis. Says he, "The truth is that no theologian of any standing in the early Church ever adopted such a theory of the Kenosis of the Logos as would involve an actual supersession of His divine form of existence by the human - a real 'becoming-man', i.e. a transformation on the part of the Logos." Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. 7, p. 683.

(2) This position also (not Warfield explicitly) has been the object of the objection of L. W. Grensted's, "The unity of the Person must be of more



If we then protest that this is a psychological absurdity which renders the study of His life an impossibility we get the reply that any view of Christ which makes it possible to subsume Him under our human categories of thought for psychological examination is of necessity a false one. We cannot examine Him, we rather must bow before Him and pray, "Speak Lord for Thy servant heareth."<sup>1</sup>

It must be remembered that the formulation of Chalcedon was wrought in static categories of thought, substantive conceptions, and as such were as insufficient for the task at hand as would be an artist attempting to reproduce a beautiful sunset with a blackboard and a piece of white chalk as his only tools. While what the Church fathers said there was true, yet how much more there is than what they said! Warfield is negligent in not reminding us of this fact, still when he himself writes of Christ it is not as of a mere two-natured, single-egoed entity but rather of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, the Lord of Glory, Our Lord (Warfield's favourite designation of Christ) who was crucified for our sins, raised from the dead for our justification and who even now intercedes for us and reigns at the right hand of God the Father. In the remaining chapters it shall be our purpose to view this Christology "in action" as it were, considering first, Warfield's understanding of the Atonement, and then his teaching as to how this redemption purchased by Christ is applied to the sinner.

We judge that Warfield's main burden was to assert that Jesus Christ was a historical person in whom alike there was reality of humanity and reality of deity. The 'how' lying behind such an assertion does not seem to be of very great concern. Warfield is thoroughly familiar with the post-Calvin

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significance than a verbal link between two sets of attributes." The Person of Christ, p. 114. Warfield's only answer would be as we here summarize, Warfield, op.cit., pp.724-725.

(1) Ibid., p. 716.



developments in Reformed Christology and is evidently in agreement with them but in general he is most closely akin to Calvin himself in largely being content to assert that the Chalcedonian doctrine of the one Person with two distinct natures is the only key which enables us to see any order in the Gospel account and there, more or less, the mystery must stand.

## CHAPTER SIX

## THE ATONEMENT (I)

## Introduction

It is only when we come to Dr. Warfield's teaching on the work of Christ that we begin to understand and appreciate his zealous concern for the orthodox Christology of Chalcedon, for in his thinking, the person of Christ and the work of Christ are so inseparably one that the person can never actually be considered per se as a pure metaphysical problem unrelated to salvation. "Jesus is the Gosepl," he wrote, "and where Jesus is not, there is no Gospel at all."<sup>1</sup> "The life that God has given us ... is deposited for us 'in the Son,' and therefore, 'he that hath the Son hath the life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.'"<sup>2</sup> Salvation consists simply in our being found in Him and thus becoming partakers of all that He has done for us.<sup>3</sup> In short, "Christ is Christianity itself; He stands not outside it but in its centre; without His name, person, and work, there is no Christianity left. In a word, Christ does not point out the way to salvation; He is the Way itself."<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, when criticizing any given Christological construction, the issue for Warfield was never acceptability — that is, by the modern mind in such questions as, Is such a teaching thinkable? — but rather sufficiency, Is the Christ so presented sufficient for our salvation, the kind of salvation of which the Scriptures say we are in need, and the kind of salvation which our Saviour actually accomplishes? Warfield suggested that behind the

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(1) Saviour of the World, p.55.

(2) Ibid., p.56.

(3) Perfectionism, vol.2, p.475; Saviour of the World, pp.56,184.

(4) Warfield finds these words of H.Bavinck, Magnalia Dei, p.312, so attractive that he closes his article "Christless Christianity," with them: Christology and Criticism, p.367.

Christological question as it was being debated among the Liberals at the turn of the century, there lay the soteriological question, for the function of Jesus had been so minimized that little difficulty was found in announcing that He may be dispensed with altogether. "No one need wonder therefore," he wrote, commenting on the inherent tendency he saw in Ritschlianism, "that when redemption is no longer sought and found in Jesus, men should begin to ask whether there remains any real necessity for Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

The thought of Professor Warfield could easily have been set forth by presenting first the work of Christ and then His person, for the organizing principle of his theology, or at least the most recurrent theme, is that of the "soteriological incarnation,"<sup>2</sup> or as he expressed it elsewhere in his sermons, "the saving Christ"<sup>3</sup> "Christ crucified,"<sup>4</sup> of "the suffering Messiah."<sup>5</sup> Everywhere in Scripture the incarnation is conceived distinctly soteriologically rather than ontologically or cosmologically,<sup>6</sup> so that it might be said, sin is the proximate occasion, and redemption the prime end, of Christ's coming into the world.<sup>7</sup> The most explicit Biblical basis for this assertion Warfield found in the book of Hebrews. Christ was "made a little lower than

(1) Christology and Criticism, p.358. NB. P. Schmiedel in Jesus or Christ, comments on the position of Ritschl, viz., Jesus was to be considered God because through Him only comes the revelation that God is a loving God. This was done, says Schmiedel, in order that the doctrine be acceptable, but in a very few years among the Moderns there were to be found hardly any who denied a revelation of a God of love outside the person of Jesus, or any who spoke of Jesus' Godhead (p.77).

(2) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.40; Saviour of the World, pp.169,171,

(3) The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.29ff.

(4) This would most likely be Warfield's choice were he to choose a descriptive title for the whole of his theology. He insists repeatedly that the incarnation is not to be thought of as in itself of saving significance apart from the Cross as did some of the Greek Fathers. Paul did not preach Christ simpliciter, but "Christ crucified." The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.45, 188,201; Saviour of the World, p.88; Studies in Theology, p.293; Critical Reviews, p.401; Faith and Life, p.380.

(5) Saviour of the World, p.77.

(6) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.38.

(7) Ibid., p.40.

the angels...because of the suffering of death." (Hebrews 2:9); He took part in flesh and blood in order "that through death..." (2:14). The Son of God as such could not die; to Him belongs by nature an indissoluble life (7:16). If He was to die, therefore, He must take to Himself another nature to which the experience of death were not impossible (2:17). Of course it is not meant that death was desired for its own sake, but rather as a means of accomplishing the ultimate object of His assimilation to men, namely that He might "make propitiation for the sins of the people."<sup>1</sup>

No doubt there can be found in Christ Jesus a rich profusion of mercies fulfilling all that man can require and more, but to Warfield it is a matter of extreme importance where we discover the centre of gravity of the benefits conferred on us, and what we ascribe to the periphery.<sup>2</sup> When the need for a ransom from sin, a reconciler with God, and sanctifier are denied a fundamental significance and are replaced as such by the need for knowledge or for deliverance from social and physical oppression, the result is a religion that follows more in the train of gnosticism<sup>or</sup> of chiliasm rather than in the main stream of the Christian faith.<sup>3</sup> In the New Testament manner of conceiving redemption, "the deliverance from guilt stands first; emancipation from the power of sin follows upon it; and the removal of all the evils of life constitutes its final issue."<sup>4</sup> That the whole of it is accomplished by God alone, the work of Christ being the sole and all-sufficient ground, Warfield is never tired of proclaiming.<sup>5</sup> All that

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p. 187.

(2) The Power of God unto Salvation, p. 42.

(3) Ibid., pp. 41-42. Cf. Studies in Theology, pp. 283-284.

(4) Studies in Theology, p. 262, quoted approvingly from O. Kirn. Cf. Saviour of the World, pp. 46-50, 56, 184; The Power of God unto Salvation, pp. 183ff; "The Princeton Theological Review," vol. XVII, p. 327.

(5) The Power of God unto Salvation, pp. 211-212; Faith and Life, pp. 218, 366, 397, 407; Saviour of the World, p. 144; Counterfeit Miracles, p. 266.



man can supply is the sinful soul to be saved<sup>1</sup> so that the cry Soli Deo Gloria is made without any reservations.<sup>2</sup>

### THE PRÉCIS

At the close of his article, "Atonement," in The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge,<sup>3</sup> Warfield gave this summary of what he considered to be the Biblical doctrine:

"The Biblical doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ finds full recognition in no other construction than that of the established Church-doctrine of satisfaction. According to it, our Lord's redeeming work is at its core a true and perfect sacrifice offered to God, of intrinsic value ample for the expiation of our guilt; and at the same time is a true and perfect righteousness offered to God in fulfillment of the demands of His law; both the one and the other being offered in behalf of His people, and, on being accepted by God, accruing to their benefit; so that by this satisfaction they are relieved at once from the curse of their guilt as breakers of the law, and from the burden of the law as a condition of life; and this by a work of such a kind and performed in such a manner, as to carry home to the hearts of men a profound sense of the indefectible righteousness of God and to make to them a perfect revelation of His love; so that, by this one and indivisible work, both God is reconciled to us and we, under the quickening influence of the Spirit bought for us by it, are reconciled to God, so making peace — external peace between an angry God and sinful men, and internal peace in the response of the human conscience to the restored smile of God."<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the thought of Professor Warfield concerning the work of Christ can be set forth most simply by allowing the above summary to serve as a précis for the next two chapters, and by utilizing the whole of his writings, to clarify the terminology employed and bring to light the consistent body of ideas which lies behind it.

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(1) Studies in Theology, p.463; there is no act of the human will hidden in the word "supply".

(2) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.210; Faith and Life, pp.265-266, 314, 321-325, 396.

(3) Vol.I, pp.349-356. Reprinted in Studies in Theology, pp.251-280.

(4) Studies in Theology, p.278. hereafter referred to as the précis.

## THE TERM "SATISFACTION"

To denote his doctrine of the atonement, Warfield uses most frequently the word "satisfaction," a scholastic term derived ultimately from Roman Law.<sup>1</sup> Generally he does not use the terminology of the schoolmen in setting forth his thought on the atonement, and a precise definition of the term in its scholastic context occurs only incidentally in the course of correcting what he perceives to be a slightly inaccurate use by J. K. Mozley.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless it is instructive to see what the term itself embodies for him in this context.

"The doctrine of 'satisfaction' denies that Christ's sufferings had 'the same quality or character as ours.' What it affirms is that they had the same value. It denies that He dies the eternal death that we sinners deserved. What it affirms is that His sufferings and death had the same value in the sight of God that our eternal death would have had. According to it, in this sense Christ did not bear our punishment, but something which took the place of our punishment. There was 'a vicarious quit-tance of the penalty'; but this was wrought by paying it."<sup>3</sup>

We are told further that the infliction of the precise penalty itself would have been solutio, in the strict sense, rather than satisfactio. The real constitutive fact of the doctrine of "satisfaction," however, is the matter of "acceptation." The reparation "accepted" by God is held to be per se equivalent to the obligation resting on the sinner.<sup>4</sup> Over against this view of acceptatio may be placed the Remonstrant theory of acceptilatio, which, reviving the Scotist conception, is willing to allow that the work of Christ sufficed to annul the sinner's obligation, "but is unwilling to allow that His blood any more than the blood of 'bulls and goats' had intrinsic value equivalent

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(1) Studies in Theology, p. 278; Critical Reviews, p. 472.

(2) The Doctrine of the Atonement, 1916, reviewed in Critical Reviews, pp. 464-475.

(3) Critical Reviews, p. 470.

(4) Ibid., p. 472.

to the fault for which it was graciously accepted by God as an atonement."<sup>1</sup> Though Warfield displays no particular taste for the use of this terminology, it is readily observable that this notion of "equivalence" is of extreme importance to him. To grant the validity of the Remonstrant view would be to concede a principle which, if followed out consistently, would mean that Christ's death was not really necessary, and accordingly cannot claim its position of central importance in the Christian faith. For if the sufferings and death of Christ do not form the sufficient ground of our justification with God but are only "accepted" as such (in the Remonstrant or Scotist sense), then why need Christ have died? God might have "accepted" something else, say Christ's work without the Cross, or our repentance and faith, or indeed just nothing at all.<sup>2</sup> Repeatedly in Warfield we see the insistence, usually in a more Biblical and dynamic way, on the sufficiency of the work of Christ. It forms a "superabundant satisfaction for the sins of the human race"<sup>3</sup> and the "sole ground of our acceptance with God." A sharp distinction between solutio and satisfactio is not anxiously maintained; indeed many of Warfield's statements about the death of Christ for us could, if taken in isolation, bear an interpretation in harmony with the notion of solutio. To allow that Christ bore our penalty but not our punishment "seems rather wiredrawn" and "very close to logomachy" to him.<sup>4</sup> This notion of satisfactio, however, is the clue to the precise meaning of the doctrine of "penal satisfaction"<sup>5</sup> as Warfield holds it.

The important thing through it all is felt by him in a twofold manner. First, "the infinite grace of God in the forgiveness of sins for Christ's

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(1) Studies in Theology, pp. 277-278.

(2) Critical Reviews, p. 204; The Plan of Salvation, p. 86.

(3) Critical Reviews, p. 473.

(4) Ibid., p. 472.

(5) Ibid., p. 129.



sake,"<sup>1</sup> and second, "the perfection of the satisfaction for our sins wrought by Christ."<sup>2</sup> These two emphases, or rather, this double emphasis is discernible throughout all of Warfield's Biblical exposition and tends to give to his soteriology a certain measure of paradox, as for instance in the contention that while the sacrifice of Christ terminated primarily on God<sup>3</sup> propitiating Him<sup>4</sup> it is nevertheless "the God-provided sacrifice,"<sup>5</sup> "the lamb of God's own providing"<sup>6</sup> which accomplishes an atonement in which it is blasphemous for a sinner to claim to share.<sup>7</sup> It would be very unfair to seek to characterize Warfield's thought on the atonement from either of these lines of thought in isolation from the other for they are never far from each other in his exposition.

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(1) Critical Reviews, p.474.

(2) Ibid., p.474.

(3) Studies in Theology, p.276.

(4) Ibid., pp.293-294; The Saviour of the World, p.87.

(5) The Saviour of the World, p.90.

(6) Ibid., p.87.

(7) Counterfeit Miracles, p.266.



## THE "CHURCH DOCTRINE"

When Warfield calls the satisfaction doctrine of the atonement "the established church-doctrine,"<sup>1</sup> he does not mean to imply that in the exact form in which he holds it it has been the property of the Church since New Testament times. He does mean, however, that the doctrine is taught in the Bible and "has been incorporated in more or less fullness of statement in the creedal declarations of all the great branches of the Church."<sup>2</sup> He pictures himself as being in that main line which passes from the apostles, through Augustine, Anselm, and the Reformers. It is interesting that he conceives of the Protestant Scholastics as being directly in that line. The doctrine of the atonement which was given its first scientific statement by Anselm "reached its complete development only at the hands of the so-called Protestant Scholastics,"<sup>3</sup> Francis Turretin and John Owen deserving especial attention. This should warn us to be cautious in seeing Warfield in too great a contrast with either the theology of this period or that of the American Calvinists of the early 19th century. Nevertheless he does not take over the doctrine uncritically for as we have it from his pen, certain aspects come forward as distinctly Warfieldian. In a sense we are fortunate that he considered their work to have been well done, and as far as the main outline of it is concerned, final, for then he is free to turn his attention to Biblical work of a more detailed nature which serves more to enrich the doctrine he takes over rather than to modify it.

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(1) Studies in Theology, p.278.

(2) Ibid., p.278.

(3) Ibid., p.279. Cf. Ibid., pp.285-286.

# THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

The predominant emphasis in Warfield's view of the work of Christ is placed on the objective expiatory aspect of it, and accordingly, Christ's functions in the three-fold office of Prophet, Priest, and King are not viewed as being on an absolute parity. "He is ... above all, our Priest," he wrote, "And it is only by saving us from sin ... that He saves us from ignorance and from misery."<sup>1</sup> Yet within the sphere of those things pertaining to the Priesthood of Christ, Warfield's heart and mind centre even more particularly on the death of Christ as the finished work of expiation which forms the objective and all-sufficient ground for man's acceptance with God.<sup>2</sup>

Probably the richest category of thought under which this work is treated in the New Testament is that of a sacrifice; but much of current thought, maintained Warfield, underrated the wealth and importance of the allusions of the writers of the New Testament to the death of Christ as sacrificial.<sup>3</sup> He insisted that it was given expression first by Jesus Himself (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; I Cor. 11:25; Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45)<sup>4</sup> with the apostles later not only stating that Christ was offered as a sacrifice (e.g. *προσφορά* Eph. 5:2

(1) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.46. Cf. The Saviour of the World, p.87.

(2) Counterfeit Miracles, p.266; Studies in Theology, p.278; Critical Reviews, p.473; Perfectionism, vol. II, pp.555ff; Faith and Life, p.316.

(3) Biblical Doctrines, p.431. NB., C.R. North in the article "Sacrifice" in A Theological Word Book of the Bible, edited by A. Richardson, "It is coming to be realized that what the New Testament says about the Cross cannot be interpreted without violence to its plain meaning if we read it without reference to ideas about sacrifice" (p.213). North in continuing his contrast between current scholarship (1950) and that of the "early years of the present century," writes, "There is [today] greater readiness than there was to study the sacrificial system sympathetically, as something that embodied ideas and aspirations which are of permanent value and significance for religion" (p.213). Cf. Biblical Doctrines, p.404 where Warfield in 1917 complained of the lack of this very thing.

(4) I Peter 1:17-19 provides the key to the problem of the redemptive significance of the blood of Jesus, Biblical Doctrines, p.433. For the remarks on the connection in the Jewish mind on the idea of purchasing, ransoming, with sacrifice Warfield refers us to Paul Fiebig, Jesu Blut ein Geheimnis?, p.19.

and Heb.10:10,14 with προσφορά understood as in Heb.10:18; θυσία in Eph.5:2 and Heb.9:26; ἐλαστήριον in Rom.3:25; and περὶ ἁμαρτίας in Rom.8:3) but working out the correspondence between His death and the different forms of Old Testament sacrifice, (the Sin-offering, Rom.8:3, Heb.13:11, I Peter 3:18; the Covenant-sacrifice, Heb.9:15-22; the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, Heb.2:17, 9:12ff; and of the Passover, I Cor.5:7). They show that the different acts of the Old Testament sacrificial ritual were repeated in Christ's experience (the slaying of the immaculate victim, Rev.5:6, 13:8, the sprinkling of the blood both in the sanctuary as in the Sin-Offering, Heb.9:13ff, and on the people as in the Covenant-sacrifice, I Peter 1:2, and the destruction of the victim, as in the Sin-offering, without the gate, Heb.13:13), and ascribe the specific effects of sacrifice to His death (e.g. passages in which the death of Christ is directly connected with the forgiveness of sin, Matt.26:28; Acts 5:30; and apparently I Cor.15:13; II Cor.5:21; Eph.1:7; Col.1:14,20; Titus 2:14; Heb.1:3; 9:28, 10:12; I Peter 2:24, 3:18; I John 2:2, 4:10; Rev.1:5).<sup>1</sup>

References to the "blood" of Jesus are treated as one and all ascriptions of a sacrificial character and effect to His death. It is not at all likely that they should be merely allusions to Jesus' violent death since in reality His death on the Cross was not so very bloody that it should be precisely the blood of Jesus which so impressed the eye-witnesses and the first Christians.<sup>2</sup> In many instances the context in which the term "blood" is used is steeped in sacrificial suggestions, (e.g. Rom.3:25; 5:9; Col.1:20; Eph.1:7, 2:13;<sup>3</sup> as

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, pp.401-402.

(2) Ibid., p.432. Following here Paul Fiebig, op.cit., p.11.

(3) Ibid., pp.431-432. As profitable Biblical studies on the sacrifice of Christ Warfield singles out, W.B.Paterson in Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, vol.IV, pp.343ff; Paul Fiebig, Jesu Blut ein Geheimnis?; Alfred Cave, The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement; J.K.Mozley, The Doctrine of the Atonement, (chapters on the Biblical material only).



well as I Cor.10:16; Heb.9:12,4; I Peter 1:2,19; I John 1:7, 5:6,8; Rev. 1:5)<sup>1</sup> so that whenever we meet with an allusion to the blood of Jesus we meet with a reference to His death as a sacrifice.<sup>2</sup> Warfield never writes with more religious feeling than when he is on the subject of the death of Christ. This is illustrated occasionally in his polemic writings<sup>3</sup> but most clearly in his sermons<sup>4</sup> as is seen in this typical passage:

"It is, in a word, the Gospel of the cross — of the cross of Christ — which the Baptist commends to us here (John 1:29); that Gospel, not only of Christ simpliciter, but of Christ as crucified, which has ever remained, and will ever remain, to the called themselves, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. The blood of Jesus, — O, the blood of Jesus! — when we have reached it, we have attained not merely the heart, but the heart of the heart of the Gospel. It is as a lamb as it had been slain, that He draws to Himself most mightily the hearts, as He attracts to Himself most fully the praises of His saints."<sup>5</sup>

In short, we might as well cast aside the whole New Testament unless the death of Christ be viewed as a real sacrifice. "Whatever a sacrifice is, that the work of Christ is."<sup>6</sup>

Before going any further it will be well to note just what Warfield has in mind when he refers to the work of Christ as a "real" sacrifice,<sup>7</sup> and, a "true and perfect" sacrifice.<sup>8</sup> Of primary significance here is his insistence that the New Testament writers did not impose on the death of Christ mechanically ideas derived from the sacrifices. With Paul, for instance, the "conviction that Christ had died for our sins, bearing them in His own body on the tree, is the primary thing: the sacrificial language he applied to it is

(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.402n, quoted approvingly from Fiebig, op.cit., p.27.

(2) Ibid., p.402.

(3) Studies in Theology, p.397.

(4) Faith and Life, pp.222ff,329,400; The Plan of Salvation, pp.52,137, 204,253.

(5) The Saviour of the World, p.88.

(6) Biblical Doctrines, p.403.

(7) Ibid., p.402.

(8) Studies in Theology, p.278.



one of his modes of stating this fundamental fact."<sup>1</sup> The great fact of expiation through the death of Christ is fundamental so that "the death of Christ was not believed to be expiatory because it was known to be a sacrifice; but was spoken of as a sacrifice because it was recognized to be expiatory."<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that the sacrificial language of the New Testament is in the nature of mere figures of speech or illustrations, but rather, "is intended to declare the simple fact."<sup>3</sup> The death of Christ is a true sacrifice because it really effects what the Old Testament sacrifices only prefigured.

In discussing the notion of sacrifice in general, Warfield distinguished three aspects to the question: (1) What is the fundamental idea which underlies sacrificial worship as a world phenomenon? (2) What is the essential implication of sacrifice in the Levitical system? (3) What is the conception of sacrifice which lay in the minds of the writers of the New Testament, when they represented Jesus as a sacrifice and ascribed to His work a sacrificial character, in its mode, its nature and its effects?

(1) In the story of Cain and Abel, Warfield perceives two conceptions of sacrifice to be differentiated since we are told not only that Jehovah had respect unto Abel and not unto Cain, but also to Abel's offering and not to Cain's. Abel made his offering "by faith" which means that it was a cry for succour, an act of contrition embodying a sense of sin, a plea for pardon; whereas Cain's offering was an act of mere homage expressing at the most, only creaturely deference to his Maker. On the basis of the appearance of these two radically different conceptions of sacrifice in the earliest Hebrew tradition

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.429n.

(2) Ibid., p.403n.

(3) Ibid., p.403.

Warfield is hesitant in seeking the origin of all sacrificial doctrines in a single primitive idea. His review of the literature on the subject<sup>1</sup> reveals that the majority of the many theories set forth to explain the supposed single idea which underlies all sacrificial worship fall into the homage class rather than the piacular; and while Warfield was not prepared to admit that there was a single theory which could explain it all, collectively the scholars were correct; that is to say, notions of the homage type probably do embody a true account of the meaning of most of the sacrificial worship in the world. Warfield was inclined to think that the natural man when offering a sacrifice would do so with some notion akin to homage rather than to contrition in mind, for "deep-rooted as the sense of sin is in every normal human conscience, and sure as it is sporadically to express itself and to colour all serious religious observances, the pride of man is no less ready to find manifestation even in his religious practices."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless there is a general conception, a common denominator as it were, which is present in all sacrificial worship. It is, "that the purpose of the sacrifice is so to affect the deity as to secure its favourable regard for the worshipper or its favourable action in his behalf or upon him."<sup>3</sup> Even the feasts in which the worshipper was supposed to "eat the God" are but outgrowths of this general conception and

"the fundamental idea of sacrifices is retained — the securing of something from the deity for the worshipper; and this is something very different from a transaction intended to call out action on the part of the worshipper himself. It is in effect subversive of the whole principle of sacrificial worship to imagine that sacrifices are offered directly to affect

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, pp.409-416.

(2) Ibid., p.414.

(3) Ibid., p.416.

the worshippers and to secure action from them; their purpose is to affect the deity and to secure beneficial action on its part."<sup>1</sup>

The above statement must be read in <sup>the</sup> light of Warfield's burning zeal against all forms of moral influence theories of the atonement, for while it is good anti-Socinian polemic it is not very good anti-Pelagian polemic, indeed if such a notion, as it stands, were applied to the sacrifice of Christ the result would be a Pelagian doctrine of the purest water. Actually what he is solicitous to emphasize is that on the grounds of the sacrifice of Christ, God is propitious towards us; and as we shall observe in his doctrine of reconciliation, the primary factor is that God loves us and the secondary factor is that we love God.

(2) Any fear of Warfield allowing a Pelagian doctrine to creep into his view of the atonement in an effort to combat the moral influence theories is dispelled when we see that he views the Levitical system as "through and through in its intention and effect, piacular,"<sup>2</sup> which means, in contrast with the homage notion, a stooping down of God to man rather than the reaching out of man towards God.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, among the variety of religious motives in the Levitical system such as adoration and sacramental communion, "the fundamental function of the sacrifice ... is to propitiate the offended deity in behalf of sinful man."<sup>4</sup> The idea of piacular mediation, of poena vicaria, is present here, too. Warfield is somewhat impatient with those scholars who refuse to see any thought of satisfaction by substitution in the Old Testament while allowing that the offerings were understood to "atone" -- to make expiation for sin and to propitiate the offended deity -- by the interposition

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.417.

(2) Ibid., p.423.

(3) Ibid., p.407.

(4) Ibid., p.423.



of a slain victim.<sup>1</sup>

Warfield sees the piacular conception as characteristic of the Levitical system, but not in the sense that it is the final outcome of a long process of development in the religious effort of Israel.<sup>2</sup> The Biblical narrative of Cain and Abel seems to teach that at the very inception of sacrificial worship there were different conceptions<sup>3</sup> so that while we may say that sacrifice was invented by man, piacular sacrifice in particular was instituted by God.<sup>4</sup>

(3) Two conceptions certainly lay together in the minds of the men of New Testament times concerning sin and its forgiveness: (1) atonement for sin was wrought by sacrifices, and (2) the excessive sufferings of the righteous had expiatory value and availed for atonement.<sup>5</sup> It is inconceivable that such relatable ideas could be kept apart and indeed the ceremonial of the Day of Atonement in the Mishnah tractate Yoma shows that that they were put together.<sup>6</sup> Consequently when the writers of the New Testament spoke of Christ as a sacrifice, "the most natural meaning that can be attached to the term on their lips is that of an expiatory offering propitiating God's favour and reconciling Him to guilty man."<sup>7</sup>

The tone of these words might be taken to indicate that Warfield has succeeded, at least to his own satisfaction, in bringing completely within the sphere of his own rationalization the manner in which atonement was wrought, but this is not a fair observation. There is still the mystery of the Cross, or as he calls it in one place, "the mystery of Grace", "the mighty paradox,"<sup>8</sup>

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.424, in reference to George F. Moore and G.B. Stevens.

(2) Ibid., p.418.

(3) Ibid., p.405.

(4) Ibid., p.407.

(5) Ibid., p.424.

(6) Ibid., p.425.

(7) Ibid., p.426.

(8) Studies in Theology, p.112.



which, though inscrutable, is nevertheless a fact; namely that God is propitious towards us for the sake of Christ who died. That this is a "fact" is testified to not only by the New Testament designation of Christ's death as a sacrifice, but also by the cessation of blood-sacrifice wherever the Christian religion has gone — "just as the tapers go out when the sun rises."<sup>1</sup> The sacrifice of Christ had the significance of the death of an innocent victim in the room of the guilty,<sup>2</sup> but just why this should have taken place or how by it God is propitiated, belongs to "the mystery of grace."<sup>3</sup>

Even after having said all this, it still will be noted that this exposition is deficient in not emphasizing properly that it is God who is always the actor in propitiation. Some of Warfield's language in which God is not only the passive subject but the object of the verbs to reconcile and to propitiate<sup>4</sup> might be interpreted in the sense that God, who no longer loves man because of man's sin, is placated at a point in history by a sacrifice to which He is related only in the act of receiving. Of course Warfield does not really believe this for he elsewhere reminds us that God's love for sinful man is eternal,<sup>5</sup> nor does he let the fact completely escape him that in the matter of atonement God alone is the Actor, the Subject;<sup>6</sup> but he fails to bring this out from a lexical standpoint in the Old Testament. This fact, which subsequent lexical studies have shown to <sup>be</sup> present in the Levitical thought,<sup>7</sup>

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.434. Reference is made here to A.Harnack's Das Wesen des Christentums, pp.98-99.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p.429, quoted approvingly from W.P.Paterson, op.cit

(3) Cf. Studies in Theology, pp.294, 295.

(4) Ibid., pp.112,292-4; Biblical Doctrines, pp.428,426; The Saviour of the World, pp.87,148; "Princeton Theological Review," vol.I, p.675.

(5) The Saviour of the World, p.234.

(6) Counterfeit Miracles, p.266.

(7) E.g. C.H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks, especially p.86 where the LXX usage of ἐξιλάσκεσθαι in the middle voice with human subject and God as the object is discussed.

is far from neglected in Warfield's thought as a whole; indeed the contention that salvation — which for him means preëminently Christ crucified<sup>1</sup> — is all of God and none of man,<sup>2</sup> that it is God who receives in His own person the penalty of sin,<sup>3</sup> that the sacrifice which accomplishes propitiation is one of God's own providing,<sup>4</sup> takes its place in Warfield's construction as one side of that great two-fold emphasis which we have mentioned; the other side being the absolute sufficiency of the satisfaction which Christ renders.

At this juncture there can be seen quite clearly the paradoxical aspect of Warfield's soteriology mentioned previously. The death of Christ is a sacrifice which accomplishes expiation of our sin by propitiating God, appeasing his righteous wrath.<sup>5</sup> In spite of this, however, it is maintained that God is love<sup>6</sup> and that this love is best seen in the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

The question must be asked — apart from the tenability of the notion of propitiation as he understands it — how is Warfield able to hold these two together in his own mind? The answer is undoubtedly to be found in his Christology. Especially is this felt to be true in reading his comments on the book of Hebrews.<sup>8</sup> "Nowhere else in the New Testament do we find the reality and the completeness of His humanity so fully expounded and so strongly insisted upon,"<sup>9</sup> but this ontological discussion gains importance from the

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(1) Studies in Theology, p.293; Critical Reviews, p.401; The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.45,188; The Saviour of the World, p.88; Faith and Life, p.380.

(2) The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.210-212; Faith and Life, pp.218,265-6, 314,321-5, 296; Studies in Theology, p.463; Counterfeit Miracles, p.266; The Saviour of the World, p.188.

(3) Studies in Theology, p.112; The Lord of Glory, p.261; The Saviour of the World, pp.78-89, of the sermon on "The Lamb of God."

(4) The Saviour of the World, p.90.

(5) Ibid., p.150.

(6) Faith and Life, p.12; The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.133.

(7) Studies in Theology, pp.112,296; The Lord of Glory, p.199.

(8) Ibid., pp.253-261; Biblical Doctrines, pp.185-188,429-431; The Saviour of the World, pp.161-188, sermon on Heb.2:9.

(9) The Lord of Glory, pp.254-5.

soteriological interest.<sup>1</sup> "The proximate end of Our Lord's assumption of humanity is declared to be that He might die" (Heb.2:9,14)<sup>2</sup> for in Himself as the Son of God He possessed "the power of an indissoluble life;" (Heb.7:16) yet being incarnate, and having taken part in flesh and blood, completely identifying Himself with men by suffering and being tempted, He, through the eternal Spirit (cf. "spirit of holiness," Rom.1:4), offered "Himself without blemish unto God, a real and sufficing sacrifice, in contrast with the shadows of the Old Covenant" (Heb.9:14)<sup>3</sup> It is not implied, however, that during "the days of His flesh" (Heb.5:7) He ceased to be God, indeed "it is the transcendent conception of Christ, which looks upon Him as 'the Son of God,' clothed with all the attributes of God, that gives its whole tone to the Epistle."<sup>4</sup> If it is true that soteriology lends interest to the ontological discussion it is conversely true that only by virtue of the fact that Jesus Christ is the "Son of God" in this transcendental sense that we are able to have complete confidence in His saving work.<sup>5</sup> "The hands that were pierced with the nails of the cross wield the sceptre. How can our salvation fail?"<sup>6</sup> "The infinitely just Judge Himself" becomes "the sinner's substitute before His own law and the infinitely blessed God" received "in His own person the penalty of sin."<sup>7</sup> It is in this sense that Christ - the Christ of Chalcedon it must be remembered - is at once Priest and Sacrifice,<sup>8</sup> Judge and Judged,<sup>9</sup> and it is in this sense that God is spoken of as being propitiated and yet heralded as the sole author

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(1) The Lord of Glory, p.258.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p.186; The Saviour of the World, pp.168-171-2; The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.25-53 where the subject of the purpose of the Incarnation is discussed in the sermon "The Saving of Christ."

(3) Biblical Doctrines, p.188.

(4) The Lord of Glory, p.255; Cf. Biblical Doctrines, p.188.

(5) The Lord of Glory, p.260.

(6) The Saviour of the World, p.186.

(7) Studies in Theology, p.112.

(8) Biblical Doctrines, p.430.

(9) Studies in Theology, p.112.



and effector of salvation.

In assessing this aspect of Warfield's work, though we may find it deficient in the light of subsequent lexical work, the mistakes are seen to be on the surface rather than in the heart of the matter. There is no Pelagianism in his view of the sacrifice of Christ and those statements cited, which if taken in isolation might appear to ~~show~~ <sup>tend toward</sup> Pelagianism, should be read in the same sense as similar statements found frequently in Calvin's commentaries.<sup>1</sup> It must be acknowledged, too, that Warfield allows the sacrificial death of Christ to assume its proper place at the very heart of Christianity, as the following paragraph makes abundantly clear:-

"Not only is the doctrine of the sacrificial death of Christ embodied in Christianity as an essential element of the system, but in a very real sense it constitutes Christianity. It is this which differentiates Christianity from other religions. Christianity did not come into the world to proclaim a new morality and, sweeping away all the supernatural props by which men were wont to support their trembling, guilt-stricken

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(1) E.g. Comm on I John 2:1,2 where we find these phrases: "... for who that is a sinner could reconcile God to us?" and "... when God is offended, in order to pacify Him a satisfaction is required." Calvin says explicitly that man cannot accomplish the reconciliation of God, and thereby says implicitly that God does need reconciling. Christ only can accomplish this: "By His (Christ's) intercession He renders God propitious to us ..." "Christ reconciles the Father to us" (Comm. Rom.3:24). "Christ was fore-ordained a Mediator, which should reconcile the Father to us by the sacrifice of His death;" "God is reconciled to us, so soon as we have our confidence reposed in the blood of Christ" (Comm. Rom.3:25). It (sin) has been blotted out by the death of Christ, in which He offered Himself to the Father as an expiatory victim" (Comm. Eph.2:16). "... Christ alone was the lawful victim and capable of appeasing God" (Comm. Heb.9:14). "... God, having been pacified by the death of His Son, receives us unto favour: for propitiation properly belongs to the sacrifice of His death." "God interposed His Son to reconcile Himself to us because He loved us." "... to propitiate God to us by expiating sins is a perpetual benefit proceeding from Christ" (Comm. I John 4:10). NB., Calvin nowhere (to the best of our knowledge) ever mentions God as the object of verbs to reconcile, pacify, or propitiate where man is the subject, in fact, he explicitly denies that this is ever the case. These words are always found with Christ as subject or else in the reflexive usage. This is precisely the case with Warfield.



souls, to throw them back on their own strong right arms to conquer a standing before God for themselves. It came to proclaim the real sacrifice for sin which God had provided in order to supersede all the poor fumbling efforts which men had made and were making to provide a sacrifice for sin for themselves; and, planting men's feet on this, to bid them go forward. It was in this sign that Christianity conquered, and it is in this sign alone that it continues to conquer."<sup>1</sup>

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.435. It is with these words that Warfield closed the article "Christ Our Sacrifice" from which we have largely drawn this summary.

# THE NEW TESTAMENT TERMINOLOGY OF REDEMPTION<sup>1</sup>

"The most direct, but not the exclusive, vehicle in the Greek New Testament for the idea which we commonly express in our current speech by the term "redeem" and its derivatives, is provided by a group of words built upon the Greek term λύτρον, 'ransom'.<sup>2</sup> From the Sanscrit LU which bears the meaning "to out" we have the Greek primitive λύειν with the general meaning "to loose", which, when applied to men, has the common meaning "to loose, release, set free, especially from bonds or prison, and so, generally, from difficulty or danger."<sup>3</sup>

The formulation of λύτρον to denote the means of deliverance in the sense of the ransom paid for prisoners was not due to any serious need of a term of its significance, for it has synonyms enough, but must be traced to the natural influence of its primitive λύειν. "It 'came natural' to a Greek, when he wished to say ransom, to say λύτρον, because when he thought of ransoming he thought in terms of λύειν."<sup>4</sup> The idea of ransoming was attached to λύειν - however firmly - by association rather than by any intrinsic meaning, for ransoming was the common mode of the release of prisoners. The process of word-formation which had begun with λύτρον did not stop with it, however; it went on and built upon it a new verb with the distinctive meaning of just ransoming, - λυτροῦν, λυτροῦσθαι - which meant and could mean nothing but to release for or by a ransom.<sup>5</sup> Thus "λυτροῦν meant intrinsically just to ransom and nothing else, and could lose, not the suggestion merely, but the open assertion of specifically ransoming as

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(1) The title of an article by Warfield, "Princeton Theological Review," 1917; republished in Biblical Doctrines, pp. 327-72.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p. 327.

(3) Ibid., p. 328.

(4) Ibid., p. 333.

(5) Ibid., p. 333.

the mode of deliverance of which it spoke, only by suffering such a decay of its native sense as to lose its very heart."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the whole of profane Greek literature λυτροῦν, λυτροῦσθαι maintained this sense unbrokenly and on the strength of the fact that λύτρον was distinctly a Greek word, formed from a Greek primitive in everyday use, Warfield concludes: "It is safe to say that no Greek, to the manner born, could write down any word, the centre of which was λύτρον, without the consciousness of ransoming as the mode of deliverance of which he was speaking."<sup>2</sup> After interposing the caveat that the New Testament writers in the main were not Greeks "to the manner born" but Jews, Warfield investigates the LXX usage.

#### The Septuagint Usage<sup>3</sup>

λύτρον occurs nineteen times in the LXX and each time in the simple sense of a ransom price. This demands no modification of profane Greek usage, nor do the usages of λυτρωτός, ἐκλύτρωσις, and ἀπολυτροῦν. λυτροῦσθαι and its two substantial derivatives, λύτρωσις and λυτρωτής present a problem however. λύτρωσις occurs eight times, four of which are in the simple literal sense of ransoming, or of ransoming in a higher spiritual sphere, and the remaining three in which the ransom-price implication is less clear. λυτρωτής occurs only twice and then as an epithet of God "our Redeemer." λυτροῦσθαι occurs 105 times, twenty-seven of which are in the simple literal usage and are confined to Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. In its parallel usage, however, it is applied to the deliverance from Egypt, and, as such, there is no emphasis on this deliverance being in mode a ransoming. In the remaining instances

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.333.

(2) Ibid., p.341.

(3) Ibid., pp.341-352.

throughout the LXX the emphasis is on the redeeming power which is divine, whether the reference be to the redemption of Israel or the individual, in either the physical or spiritual sense.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty is that this general usage of λυτροῦσθαι outside the Pentateuch, together with the synonymy in which it sometimes stands, argues that the idea of deliverance by divine power has completely replaced any notions of redemption by payment of a ransom;<sup>2</sup> e.g. Dan.3:88, 6:27 (LXX); Lam.5:8; Psalms 7:2.

Warfield does not think that this conclusion is warranted, however, and cites the Pentateuch usage where the word is employed in its literal sense as the main fact to be urged against it. In addition to this, there are to be found every now and then passages in the rest of the LXX which, while not directly employing λυτροῦσθαι in the sense of ransoming, nevertheless reveal an underlying consciousness of this notion. E.g., Psalms 73(74):2, 68(69):8; Isai.63:1ff in which it is said, "... I have made Egypt thy price (ἀλλογυα).". Perhaps the most striking is Isa. 62:3 "Ye were sold for nought (δωρεάν) and ye shall not be redeemed (λυτρωθῆσεσθε) with money." While it is true the redemption here is to be wrought by the might of Jehovah rather than by payment of a ransom price, "it is equally intimated that a redemption without a price paid is as anomalous a transaction as a sale <sup>without</sup> ~~with~~ money passing."<sup>3</sup> Warfield concludes that "such passages as these ... could not have been written by and to men in whose minds the underlying implication of ransoming had faded out of the terms employed."<sup>4</sup> Although redemption is described as being wrought by the almighty power of God, "that was not in forgetfulness that redemption was properly a transaction which implies paying a price."<sup>5</sup>

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.349.

(2) Ibid., p.351.

(3) Ibid., p.352.

(4) Ibid., p.352.

(5) Ibid., p.352.



## New Testament

Theodor von Zahn had endeavoured to show that ἀπολύτρωσις in Rom. 3:24 should be taken in the undifferentiated sense of deliverance and A. Ritschl had argued<sup>1</sup> that the Hebrew stems לָחַל and לָחַל originally possessed, as did their Greek terms, the sense of delivering by means of purchase, but had lost this implication of purchase in the course of their usage, as did similarly the Greek terms which were employed to render them. Accordingly, the New Testament terminology of redemption must be taken in this broadened sense and even the apparent exceptions must not be thought of as reassertions of the original modal implication of purchase. Over against this, Warfield insisted that the original sense of ransoming had not been wholly obliterated from לָחַל and לָחַל though it was sometimes submerged in their figurative use. The Greek terms, too, which had been fitted to these Hebrew ones in the LXX seem to have been selected to render them because they were their closest Greek representatives in their literal sense. They therefore bear evidence that they retained their fundamental meaning of redemption, though, in addition, acquiring from the Hebrew terms their figurative meaning.<sup>2</sup>

Warfield contested even more strongly the assertion that the New Testament terminology represents a mere "projection" of the LXX usage. The terminology is different and therefore certainly not derived.<sup>3</sup> In fact part of the explanation for the adoption by the New Testament writers of the rare form ἀπολύτρωσις might be seen in their desire to portray something different from the Jewish hope of deliverance by sheer power.<sup>4</sup> It is not reasonable to suppose that the New Testament writers carried over the senses of

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(1) In Justification and Reconciliation, 3rd ed., 1899, pp. 222ff.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p. 360.

(3) Ibid., pp. 360-361.

(4) Ibid., p. 355.

the LXX terms while going out of their way to alter the terms.<sup>1</sup> The tremendous fact of the historical mission of Christ forms a barrier against the assumption of a simple projection of LXX usage into the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> It cannot be thought that the New Testament writers borrowed their language from the Jewish eschatology to ascribe to Christ merely a Messianic deliverance of the nature of that which Moses accomplished by leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, without any implication that it is wrought by an act of ransoming;<sup>3</sup> for between the Jewish and the New Testament conceptions of the Messianic deliverance there is less an analogy than a fundamental contradiction.<sup>4</sup> The Jewish conception was that of an eschatological deliverance wrought by the Messiah by sheer power in the end-time, whereas for the Christians

"the redemption of God's people does not wait ... for the end-time, but has already been in principle wrought and awaits only its full realization in all its effects in the end-time."<sup>5</sup> And precisely what has already been wrought,

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p. 360.

(2) Though in opposition to contemporary scholars such as A. Ritschl, Th. Zahn, Oltramare, Warfield is in essential agreement with Büchsel at this point who in the Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by G. Kittel, Band I, p. 353, insists that while the meaning of λυτροῦσθαι had been more or less "washed out" in the LXX, it becomes more specific in the New Testament. The thought of ransom comes again to its right by virtue of the fact of the death of Jesus and its value as a ransom (Lösegeld).

(3) Warfield makes nothing of the association of the deliverance from Egypt with the Passover Lamb. We can hardly believe that the Hebrew mind could have remembered God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt without recalling the Passover Lamb.

(4) Biblical Doctrines, p. 354.

(5) Warfield here is in general agreement with J. Weiss who held that terms such as ἀπολύτρωσις have primarily an eschatological reference but have received by the New Testament writers a certain "predating". Warfield is more inclined than Weiss, however, to see a specific reference to the means as well as the effects of the salvation accomplished. Cf. Biblical Doctrines, p. 327 and J. Weiss in Commentary of I Cor. 1:30ff (Meyer series). Harnack had maintained that the terms σωτηρία, ἀπολύτρωσις and the like do not always or regularly have reference to deliverance from sin. "In the superscription of the Epistle from Lyons, for example, it is manifestly the future redemption that is to be understood ..." (History of Dogma, Eng. Tr. vol. I, p. 202). Warfield insists that

contributing the very hinge on which the whole conception of the Messianic deliverance turns, is just that act of expiation which is wholly absent from the Jewish representation."<sup>1</sup>

Consequently it was Warfield's strong contention that the ordinary usage of the derivatives of λύτρον in the New Testament is not without modal implications as the contextual evidence shows, and that the broadened sense of the deliverance without a ransom should not be made normative and imposed upon the terms.<sup>2</sup> His starting point is Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45 in which Jesus describes His own mission on earth as a giving of His life as a ransom for many. Echoes of this are found in I Tim. 2:26; Titus 1:14; I Peter 1:18, and Heb. 9:12.

The preposition ἀπό (away from) in the rare compound substantive, ἀπολύτρωσις, calls attention to the deliverance wrought rather than to the process of ransoming;<sup>3</sup> yet even this term is used in certain instances in which the context defines the deliverance as having been obtained by the payment of a price: Heb. 9:15 by a death, Eph. 1:7 by the blood of Christ, and Rom. 3:24 by His being offered as a propitiatory sacrifice.<sup>4</sup> Eph. 1:14 must be read in the light of Eph. 1:7, and Col. 1:14 but repeats Eph. 1:14. From these passages we learn that ἀπολύτρωσις describes the effects of the ransoming intimated as extending into the future, not being reaped until the end itself. This forms the key to the eschatological application in Luke 21:28, Rom. 8:23, and Eph. 4:30. Though there is nothing in I Cor. 1:30 independently to fix the sense of the term, it should doubtless be read in accordance with

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Harnack's fault lay in introducing an illicit alternative. "It is not a matter of either the redemption from sin or the future deliverance from wrath. Both are embraced." Cf. Biblical Doctrines, p. 371.

- (1) Biblical Doctrines, pp. 354ff.
- (2) Ibid., p. 361.
- (3) Ibid., p. 362.
- (4) Ibid., p. 362.



its etymological implications particularly in a writer like Paul whose whole thought of "redemption" is coloured with the blood of Christ. Heb.11:35 speaks of a deliverance, the price of which might be thought to be apostasy, which the victims were unwilling to pay.<sup>1</sup>

In the appearances of λυτροῦσθαι in Luke 24:21, λύτρωσις in Luke 1:68 and 2:38, and λυτρωτής in Acts 7:35 we are still on Old Testament ground.<sup>2</sup> Of course as they were written down by Luke they were written "with Calvary read into their heart." And even "as they were originally spoken they were doubtless informed with longings which though surer of the deliverance promised than instructed in the precise manner in which it should be wrought, were not without some premonitions, vague and uninformed, perhaps, that it would be costly."<sup>3</sup>

#### Redeemer

In keeping with his emphasis on the objective work of Christ, Warfield found in the term "Redeemer" the most precious of all the titles ascribed to Him. Of even more intimate revelation than either "Lord" or "Saviour", "it gives expression not merely to our sense that we have received salvation from Him, but also to our appreciation of what it cost Him to procure this salvation for us. It is the name specifically of the Christ of the Cross. Whenever we pronounce it, the cross is placarded before our eyes and our hearts are filled with loving remembrance not only that Christ has given us salvation, but that He paid a mighty price for it."<sup>4</sup> Just how much the term — or rather, to be fair to Warfield, the truth enshrouded in the term — means to him, can be further seen in these words of genuine feeling penned at the close of the

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.364.

(2) Ibid., p.365.

(3) Ibid., p.365.

(4) Ibid., p.375.



article "Redeemer and Redemption"<sup>1</sup> in which the objective, editorial style is forgotten as the reader is addressed in the second person:

"The real thing for you to settle in your minds, therefore, is whether Christ is truly a Redeemer to you, and whether you find an actual Redemption in Him, — or are you ready to deny the Master that bought you, and to count His blood an unholy thing? Do you realize that Christ is your Ransomer and has actually shed His blood for you as your ransom? Do you realize that your salvation has been bought at a tremendous price, at the price of nothing less precious than blood, and that the blood of Christ, the Holy One of God? Or, go a step further: do you realize that this Christ who thus shed His blood for you is Himself your God? So the Scriptures teach."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield points out that *λυτρωτης* appears only once in the New Testament (Acts 7:35) and that in direct reference to Moses, not Christ, — perhaps in indirect reference to Christ in the sense of His being prefigured by Moses.<sup>3</sup> Not only is the term in this pedantic sense "unbiblical" when applied to Christ, but also it is not found in Christian literature until the middle of the second century in Justin Martyr's "Dialogue with Trypho the Jew."<sup>4</sup> In asking why and on what grounds Warfield makes so much of the title "Redeemer" we enter immediately into the whole question of just how this term has come to have such an important place in Christian literature, hymnody, and liturgy.<sup>5</sup> In Warfield's case the reason is seen in the fact that in saying "Redeemer" we refer at once to the total effects <sup>of</sup> the work of Christ and also to the fact that its mode involved

(1) "Princeton Theological Review", vol. XIV, 1916, pp. 177-201; reprinted in Biblical Doctrines, pp. 375-398.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p. 397.

(3) Ibid., pp. 327, 364.

(4) Dis. 30:3 in which the language of Ps. 18:14 is applied to Christ.

(5) Cf. Biblical Doctrines, pp. 378, 369. Recently we have had occasion to note a rich use of the term in at least one instance in the coronation service of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. The Archbishop, after delivering the Orb with the Cross to the Queen, said, "Receive this Orb set under the Cross, and remember that the whole world is subject to the Power and Empire of Christ our Redeemer." The Form and Order of Her Majesty's Coronation, p. 24.

paying a great price.<sup>1</sup> But this would not explain why the title was not used earlier in the history of Christianity. Why, if it is a good and proper title, was it not used in the New Testament period? Warfield suggests that the intense concreteness of λειτουργία, and the definiteness with which it imputes a particular function to Christ, militated against its adoption into wide devotional use until the analytical edges had been softened a little by habit.<sup>2</sup> Now, in the twentieth century, he pointed out, we are witnessing the death of the English word *redeem* and its derivatives. By being employed to translate the German *erlösen*, *Erlösung*, *Erlöser*, which contain no native suggestion of purchase, the process is hastened and this, together with the general theological trend in 1916 to ignore any "objective" work of Christ, formed for Warfield a very lamentable situation.<sup>3</sup>

#### TWOFOLD ASPECT OF JUSTIFICATION

"... They are relieved at once from the curse of their guilt as breakers of the law, and from the burden of the law as a condition of life ..."

In speaking of the work of Christ as "ample for the expiation of our guilt," and also as "a true and perfect righteousness offered to God in fulfillment of the demands of His law," Warfield is distinguishing a twofold aspect of justification:<sup>4</sup> (1) on the negative side we receive the remission of sins<sup>5</sup> because as our sacrifice, Christ bore our iniquities and expiated them on the altar of the cross,<sup>6</sup> and (2) on the positive side we receive "a title to holiness."<sup>7</sup>

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.375.

(2) Ibid., p.379.

(3) Ibid., p.387.

(4) Faith and Life, p.177.

(5) Ibid., p.177.

(6) Christ our Sacrifice, Op. I; The Saviour of the World, p.84.

(7) Critical Reviews, p.131; Faith and Life, p.177.

Through justification a sinner has "not only relief from the penalty of sin but a place among those who are sanctified. "Who have been sanctified - (in reference to Acts 26:18) - that he cannot yet say of himself. But by God's grace he has a title to a place among those who can say it."<sup>1</sup> Warfield does not teach that Christ is our righteousness until such time as we have earned our own righteousness and can stand before God independent of Christ; for the contrast between the righteousness which a man can make for himself and the righteousness that God gives him is absolute.<sup>2</sup> "The one antithesis of all the ages is that between the rival formulae: Do this and live, and live and do this: Do and be saved, and be saved and do."<sup>3</sup> What he has in mind when using the figure of the "title" is based on his view of sin as pollution as well as guilt.<sup>4</sup> While in some sense guilt is the more basic,<sup>5</sup> we are in just as absolute a need for one as for the other. While guilt is expiated in fact, our pollution is taken away only in principle<sup>6</sup> and is done away in fact by the progressive work of the Holy Spirit which is never complete in this life.

The figure of a debt and its payment is also employed in connection with this second aspect of justification. Jesus taught His disciples that they were in an infinite debt (Matt.18:25) for which the whole world was not enough to pay (Mark 8:36). Furthermore, not one jot or tittle of the law should pass away nor would they come out free until the uttermost farthing was paid of all their debt.<sup>7</sup> Yet He Himself, in His death is our Ransom, paid in our stead,

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(1) viz., Holy angels and sanctified men; Faith and Life, p.178.

(2) Faith and Life, p.321 in commentary on Phil.3:9.

(3) Ibid., p.324.

(4) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.189.

(5) The Saviour of the World, pp.88,151,158; The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.189; "Princeton Theological Review," vol.I, p.144.

(6) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.197.

(7) Christ our Sacrifice, Opuscula, I.

to deliver us from the hopeless debt we owe for sin.<sup>1</sup>

Warfield, true to his style, shows no particular zeal for maintaining, throughout his writings, this neat distinction of the double aspect of justification. He does not, for instance, draw any special correlation between Christ's active obedience and our title to holiness, or His passive obedience and the remission of our guilt. He does maintain with consistency, however, that the issue of issues in religion is the question of man's acceptance with God,<sup>2</sup> to which Christianity's answer is always Christ: not Christ simpliciter in a purely ontological sense, but the Christ of the Cross and of the empty tomb. In thus resting our salvation completely on the work of Christ in contrast to the work of man, Warfield definitely embraced both what the Reformed Orthodox theologians termed the active and the passive obedience of Christ,<sup>4</sup> but there appears in his writings no special concern for the maintenance of the distinction itself.

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(1) Ibid.; Biblical Doctrines, p.397.

(2) Faith and Life, p.177; The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.41.

(3) The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.45,188; The Saviour of the World, p.88; Critical Reviews, p.401; Studies in Theology, p.295; Faith and Life, p.380.

(4) Critical Reviews, p.131.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

## THE ATONEMENT (II)

## DEFINITE ATONEMENT

"... On behalf of His people ..."

Perhaps no other aspect of Reformed Orthodoxy has been found to be such a stumbling block as has that commonly known as "Limited Atonement". We cannot but suspect that Warfield too, felt a certain uneasiness with it, for while he did not alter radically the orthodox teaching, his modification of its meaning, particularly in the eschatological sense, led him into an adjustment of the various factors involved which remains today distinctly Warfieldian. It will be noted at the outset that he never used the term "Limited Atonement", preferring instead the adjective "Definite". This in itself is significant for it is upon the basis of the definiteness of Christ's work that the whole notion of a universal atonement is rejected. In a word, the work of Christ in atonement so definitely expiates the sins of those for whom it was undertaken that to say it was done for all men would be tantamount to affirming the ultimate salvation of all men.<sup>1</sup> This thought comes out over and over again in Warfield's writings on the atonement, as for instance when the Gospel is described not as "a proclamation of escape from sin's penalty — not even a proclamation of simple pardon of sin, or of the eradication of sin — but specifically a proclamation of 'justification'".<sup>2</sup>

His criticism of the rectoral view of the atonement is in this same vein. "The theory conceives the work of Christ not as supplying the ground on which

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(1) Critical Reviews 203, Opuscula VI, 2. The Plan of Salvation, p.72, Cf. "The Expositor" vol.21, p.249.

(2) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.75.

God forgives sin, but only as supplying the ground on which He may safely forgive sins on the sole ground of His compassion."<sup>1</sup>

An even clearer revelation of his thought is provided for us when in reply to J.G. Smith who had put forth the objection that the reality of the coming judgment disproves the penal satisfaction view of the atonement, Warfield wrote:

"Did we not have it here repeatedly flaunted in our face, it would be incredible that anyone could fail to distinguish between the satisfaction rendered on the Cross for Christ's people and the judgment which still hangs over those who are 'without'. It is quite true that those who are in Christ Jesus do not come into judgment; but how that abolishes the judgment impending over those who are not in Christ, it is, we do not say difficult, but impossible, to see. What has blinded the eyes of Mr. Smith here is no doubt the strength of his revulsion from the Reformed doctrine of a 'definite atonement', and his consequent zeal for a so-called 'universal atonement'. He is quite right in insisting that a universal satisfaction for sin on the Cross would have abolished all impending judgment."<sup>2</sup>

It was quite impossible, after Warfield's way of thinking, to maintain on the one hand that the death of Christ forms a real propitiation for sin, and on the other to hail this work as "universal", without thereby arriving at a disastrous conclusion. E.g.,

"Certainly if God is to be declared to love all men alike, the Son to have propitiated for the sins of all men alike, and the Holy Spirit to have applied the benefits of that propitiation to all men alike, nothing is left but to assert that therefore all men alike are saved; or else to assert that all that God can do for sinful man cannot avail to save him and he must just be left to save himself."<sup>3</sup>

It will be noted that another factor is mentioned in this quotation, namely that of the application by the Holy Spirit of the benefits of the propitiation to the believer. Suffice it to say at this point<sup>4</sup> that the Holy

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(1) Studies in Theology, p.288, Cf. Studies in Theology, p.289, Opuscula VI, p.56.

(2) Critical Reviews, p.202.

(3) The Plan of Salvation, p.79.

(4) We shall discuss later the relation Warfield saw between the atonement and the gift of the Holy Spirit, but it is impossible to keep it entirely out of the discussion until then.

Spirit is granted as the agent by which the salvation wrought on the Cross is realized in the life of the believer.<sup>1</sup> The whole of the impetration of salvation precedes the whole of its application so that "we are bought unto God by Christ in order that we may be brought to God by the Holy Spirit".<sup>2</sup>

A very strong sense of the solidarity of the elect of all ages with their Head, Christ, is involved here. In commenting on Col.3:3 in reference to Rom.4:25 Warfield wrote, "Christ died for our trespasses and was raised again for our justification ... If we be Christians at all, we are such only in virtue of the fact that when He died, He died for us and we, therefore, died as sinners with His death; and that when He arose again for our justification, we rose again into newness of life with Him ..." <sup>3</sup> It is unthinkable that any could perish for whom Christ died, so specifically does the Holy Spirit apply precisely the propitiation wrought by Christ.<sup>4</sup> "Christ died for all, therefore all died."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, to participate thus in the death of Christ is salvation; for "if while we were sinners, we were reconciled with God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by Him" [Rom.5:10].<sup>6</sup> And again, "if we died with Christ we believe that we shall also live with Him" [Rom.6:8].<sup>7</sup> No distinction is possible between men who have only died with Christ and those who also live with Him. To die with Christ means to live together with Him; to be reconciled with God through the death of Christ means to enter eventually into the full inheritance of life.<sup>8</sup>

(1) Cf. Faith and Life, pp.177f.

(2) Ibid., p.399. comm. on Titus 3:4-7.

(3) Ibid., p.351.

(4) The Saviour of the World, p.141.

(5) We shall see just what this "all" means. Warfield in using the verse in this connection is simply insisting that the "all" for whom Christ died are precisely the "all" who therefore have died.

(6) As quoted by Warfield, The Saviour of the World, pp.141-142.

(7) Ibid., p.141.

(8) The Saviour of the World, p.142.

Ibid., p.142.



Following Warfield's reasoning: all those, then, for whom Christ died, all those who were the objects of God's reconciling action in Christ, come unfailingly into full salvation. On this basis, the affirmation of a universal, "each and every" atonement implies the salvation of every individual who has ever lived or ever will live. But this is rejected since we know from the Scripture as well as from secular history that many men have died in rejection of Christ and many more have died without having heard of His gospel. Moreover the Scriptures teach that no man can be saved without a knowledge of Jesus Christ in His saving work,<sup>1</sup> a truth which is not to be transmuted into its opposite that no man can be lost without a knowledge of Christ in His saving work.<sup>2</sup>

Warfield's answer to the question which has been somewhat fastidiously asked in the present milieu of affirmations of the universalism of salvation, "What must I do to be lost?"<sup>3</sup> would simply be, "Do nothing". The gospel does not come to men who are in some neutral state presenting an issue upon decision of which they are either saved or lost. It comes bringing eternal life into this world of darkness and death. Fundamental to the presentation of the discourses presented in the Gospel of John is "the conception of the world as lying in the evil one and therefore judged already [John 3:18], so that upon those who are not removed from the evil of the world the wrath of God is not so much to be poured out as simply abides". [John 3:34, Cf. I John 3:14.]<sup>4</sup> Jesus did not come into the world to condemn the world but to save the world [John

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(1) This refers to adults only. N.B. "Proposed Reply of New Brunswick Presbytery on the Revision Question," Oct. 6, 1891 of which Warfield was the author, C. Hodge is quoted with approval. "It is the common faith of the Christian world that so far as adults are concerned, there is no salvation without the knowledge of Christ and faith in Him." from C. Hodge, Systematic Theology, vol. I, p. 25.

(2) The Plan of Salvation, p. 83.

(3) We have heard the phrase used a number of times in informal discussions but have not been able to locate its exact source.

(4) Biblical Doctrines, p. 35. Cf. Biblical Doctrines, p. 5.



3:17, 8:12, 9:5, 12:47, Cf. 4:42] for the simple reason that "the already condemned world needed no further condemnation, it needed saving."<sup>1</sup> Those who perish out of Christ do so on the grounds of their sins,<sup>2</sup> the rejection of Christ as Saviour being just sin reduced to its essence, the rejection of God. Consequently the contention of B. Weiss that, "what brings unbelievers to death is no longer their sin (expiated in the death of Christ), but their rejection of the divinely appointed mediator of salvation", did not meet with Warfield's approval. He opposed it with the following argument:

"Is not the rejection of Jesus as our propitiation a sin? And if it is a sin, is it not like other sins, covered by the death of Christ? If this great sin is excepted from the expiatory efficacy of Christ's blood, why did not John tell us so, instead of declaring without qualification that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world? [re. I John 2:2.] And surely it would be very odd condemning sin, in a world the vast majority of the dwellers in which have never heard of this Redeemer, and nevertheless perish. On what ground do they perish, all their sins having been expiated?"<sup>3</sup>

Needless to say, the very fact that they do perish is strongly contested, even by those who would hold that there is no salvation outside of union with Christ, for there is the matter of probation after death to be considered. That God might continue such probations after death cannot be refuted on a priori grounds, maintained Warfield, for there is nothing irrational in the notion, "but the Word of God ... declares that the will of God is that men should repent here and now while after death comes the judgment."<sup>4</sup> The objection advanced that death does not end probation and that God will not hold a soul in existence for the purpose of subjecting it to torment, — Warfield quite evidently conceived of the doctrine of eternal punishment as in no sense coalescing with any form

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p. 36.

(2) "The Expositor", op. cit., p. 247.

(3) Ibid., p. 247.

(4) Opuscula, VII, p. 2.

of annihilationism<sup>1</sup> — such objections, he held, do not rest on exegetical theology, but on a derived conception of divine nature. Moreover, they end in denying God a moral nature and making of Him something less than a person, for His love cannot be understood as "vague impersonal tenderness" but as "purposing affection which brings redemption to those on whom it looks".

"The real question ... is not what such a God as we may conjure up for our purposes, must do, but what the actual God of the Scriptures declares it is His will to do."<sup>2</sup> The God of the Bible is "one who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will" [Eph.1:11]; and who will have mercy on whom He will have mercy [Rom.9:15].<sup>3</sup>

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Should universalism of salvation be disallowed, the only other line of reasoning to take from the basis of a universal atonement is that the atonement does not suffice to save,<sup>4</sup> and accordingly men are saved or lost on account of some natural difference in them. "Thus the grace of God is fundamentally denied and salvation is committed, in the last analysis, to man himself."<sup>5</sup> This judgment Warfield made against Evangelical Lutheranism where, with an emphasis on the sacraments as a means of Grace, the monergistic regeneration wrought by God in baptism was insisted on but in such a manner as to make the effect dependent on the attitude of the recipient,<sup>6</sup> as well as against Evangelical Arminianism in which the difficulty of man being dead in sin is got over by the

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(1) Studies in Theology, p.457.

(2) Opuscula VI, p.2.

(3) Ibid., p.2.

(4) "The Expositor", op. cit., p.246.

(5) The Plan of Salvation, p.84.

(6) Ibid., p.78.

postulation of a graciously restored ability for all men, earned for them by the sacrifice of Christ and applied to them automatically.<sup>1</sup>

The matter of unconditional election and predestination is part and parcel with that of limited, or "definite" atonement but perhaps the foregoing discussion of the ideas underlying Warfield's phrase "on behalf of His people..." will serve as a fair basis upon which to offer some criticism. His essential difficulty seems to lie in the rationalistic element of his thinking which he never completely sloughed off. Though he had criticized Charles Hodge for allowing "theological predilection" to determine his exegesis at times,<sup>2</sup> Warfield himself went too far in deriving teachings which "by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture."<sup>3</sup> The positive side of what Warfield teaches as "definite atonement" is a precious Biblical truth, but the negative side of it, namely that Christ did not suffer and die for the sins of every human being, is but a logically drawn corollary which not only is not expressly taught anywhere in the Bible, but is rather directly contradicted by statements of Scripture. The whole of Warfield's teaching at this point takes on a certain syllogistic nature which runs something like this:

Major premise: God in Christ performs a work which actually amounts to the salvation of man. No part of salvation is left to the sinner. The atonement is in no sense a work which needs to be completed or augmented by an act of man such as faith or repentance.

Minor premise: All men are not saved.

Conclusion: The work of atonement was not done for all, "each and every" man.

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(1) The Plan of Salvation, pp. 83-84.

(2) A. A. Hodge, The Life of Charles Hodge, p. 589.

(3) "Westminster Confession of Faith", chpt. I, par. 6.

That this desire for logical consistency is determinative, comes to light in a remark Warfield made on the position of Joseph A. Beet. In reference to the teaching which was essentially that of Warfield, Beet had written:

"This terrible error prevalent a century ago, is but an overstatement of the important Gospel truth that salvation is, from the earliest turning to God to final salvation, altogether a work of God in man, and a merciful accomplishment of a purpose of God before the foundation of the world."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield was constrained to acknowledge the evangelicalism of this confession and could only complain that Beet had not been logically consistent, i.e., "whether he gives validity to this postulate in all his thinking is of course a different matter."<sup>2</sup> Likewise in reference to A.J. Halle who, from his Lutheran standpoint was thoroughly evangelical and nevertheless rejected any doctrine of a limited atonement, Warfield wrote, "The purity of [his] evangelical confession must be frankly recognized even though we cannot avoid cherishing misgivings whether it is permitted to condition all of the thought of its author ..."<sup>3</sup> It should be noted well that Warfield does not charge either of these men with being guilty of opposing any particular passage of Scripture in failing to teach a limited or definite atonement, but charges them rather with being logically inconsistent. The importance which Warfield places on the matter of logical consistency at this point is further illustrated in his commendation of "certain Arminian thinkers" for discarding a hypothetical universalism; though of course he did not like the fact that they moved, in consequence, away from, rather than toward his doctrine of definite atonement.<sup>4</sup>

Without entering into a detailed point-by-point argument with Warfield on his understanding of the extent of the atonement, we pause only to mention one extremely objectionable feature of it which we believe strikes at the heart of

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(1) "The Homiletical Review," Feb. 1910, vol. LIX, no. 2, p. 101, as quoted by Warfield in The Plan of Salvation, p. 75.

(2) The Plan of Salvation, p. 76.

(3) Ibid., pp. 76-77.

(4) Critical Reviews, p. 203.



the matter. Upon the basis of this doctrine of definite atonement it is impossible for an evangelist to tell his congregation that Christ has died for them, that is, not unless he can be assured that they are all of the elect. He can tell them that they are sinners, and that there is a coming judgment, and that therefore they should repent. But the Gospel is Good News, a proclamation of what God has done in Christ for sinful man. It provides the ground for a sharpened and quickened call to repentance and this call is universal. Before the mission of Christ, God "winked at" ~~certain of~~ man's ignorance but now He "commandeth all men everywhere to repent" [Acts 17:30]. Accordingly the New Testament call to repentance and faith in Christ is termed "the preaching of the Cross;" [I Cor. 1:18] which would indeed have been strange had the Cross stood in relation only to the elect. In contrast to Warfield's emphasis on the solidarity of Christ with the elect, the New Testament, especially the book of Hebrews, emphasizes just His solidarity with mankind, "of flesh and blood" (Heb. 2:14).

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The main obstacle confronting anyone who would affirm some form of a limited atonement is to be found in Scripture verses such as I John 2:2 in which Christ is expressly spoken of as being the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and Heb. 2:9 where He is referred to as having tasted death for every man. Interestingly enough it is in his exegesis of precisely these two texts that Warfield comes forth with a form of teaching which is not discernible in the Princeton tradition prior to his time, nor in Calvin.

In making his exegesis of I John 2:2, Warfield quite properly rejects at the outset the exposition of John Cotton who held that although Christ by His expiatory death has bought for His people some things — and these the most

important things — which He has not bought for all men, yet there are some most desirable things also which He has bought for all men. Warfield comments,

"This, however, is certainly not what John says. It admits of no doubt that John means to say that the Christians whom he was addressing, and with whom he identifies himself — they and he alike — enjoy no privilege with reference to the propitiation of Christ, which is not enjoyed by them in common with the whole world."<sup>1</sup> "The sins of the world have been as really and fully expiated as those of the Christians John was addressing, and his own."<sup>2</sup>

In seeking to attach a precise meaning to the phrase, "the whole world," the exposition of Calvin, in which the phrase is understood to refer to "the churches of the elect dispersed through the whole world,"<sup>3</sup> is rejected with the significant comment, "When the assumptions on which this view of the passage is founded are scrutinized, however, they cannot be said particularly to commend themselves."<sup>4</sup> The "we" and "our" of the passage, Warfield takes as a reference to the whole Christian community with which the "whole world" is brought into contrast. He accordingly affirms that "the expiatory efficiency of Christ's blood extends to the entire race of mankind."<sup>5</sup> Thus a universalism of some sort is to be maintained but not in a sense that would entail that the whole body of the world's sin is covered in the sight of God.

The expedient of distinguishing between Christ as "Advocate" and as "Propitiation" so that the whole world has Him as its Propitiation, but only believers as their Advocate, is rejected also for John declares

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(1) "The Expositor", op. cit., p.242.

(2) Ibid.

(3) From Calvin's Comm. on I John 2:2 as quoted by Warfield in "The Expositor", op.cit., p.244. It is significant that only this portion of Calvin's sentence is quoted. It reads in full: "Then under the word all or whole, he [John] does not include the reprobate, but designates those who should believe as well as those who were then scattered through various parts of the world". The departure from Calvin at this point is not radical for Warfield himself is not prepared to assert that the propitiation of Christ extends to the reprobate.

(4) "The Expositor", op.cit., p.244.

(5) Ibid., p.246.

"that Christ is — not 'was', the propitiation is as continuous in its effects as the advocacy — our propitiation, in order to support his reference of sinning Christians to Christ as their Advocate with the Father, and to give them confidence in the efficacy of His advocacy. The efficacy of the advocacy rests on that of the propitiation, not the efficacy of the propitiation on that of the advocacy. It was in the propitiatory death of Christ that John finds Christ's saving work: the advocacy is only its continuation — its unceasing presentation in heaven. The propitiation, accordingly, does not merely lay a foundation for a saving operation, to follow or not to follow as circumstances may determine. It itself saves. And this saving work is common to the whole world."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield cuts this Gordian knot by pointing out what he terms "a pro-tensive element" in his [John's] conception of the world, that is, the world as it stretches out before him in time.<sup>2</sup> In other words, "at the end of the day He [Christ] will have a saved world to present to His Father."<sup>3</sup> It is in this sense that Warfield thinks of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world;<sup>4</sup> "He had come into the world to save not individuals merely, out of the world, but the world itself. It belongs therefore distinctly to His mission that He should take away the sin of the world."<sup>5</sup> This is not to be diluted into the notion that He came to offer salvation to the world or to lay such a basis for salvation that it is the world's fault if it is not saved; on the contrary, "He actually saves the world."<sup>6</sup>

The contrast in I John 2:2 between the "we" and "our" on the one hand and the "whole world" on the other is thought of after the same manner as that existing between the leaven and the meal, and the mustard seed and the full tree in the parables (Matt. 13:31-35).<sup>7</sup> Just as, at the time of utterance, the speck of leaven and the small mustard seed are dwarfed by the size of the

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(1) "The Expositor," op.cit., p.249.

(2) Ibid., p.251.

(3) Ibid., p.252; Cf. The Plan of Salvation, p.103.

(4) Cf. The Saviour of the World, p.142; "Princeton Theological Review", vol.I, p.140.

(5) "The Expositor", op.cit., p.251.

(6) Ibid., p.252.

(7) Ibid., p.253; Biblical and Theological Studies, p.348.



three measures of meal and the mustard tree respectively, so the "little flock" to whom John spoke was dwarfed by the whole world at that time. But similarly, as the leaven fills the whole of the meal, so shall salvation cover the earth; and as the mustard seed grows into a tree, so the Church becomes one day the world itself.<sup>1</sup>

This is what Warfield calls an "eschatological" universalism as opposed to an "each and every" universalism.<sup>2</sup> The God-appointed goal toward which the race is advancing is salvation<sup>2</sup> but this salvation of the world is accomplished in the same manner as is the salvation of an individual, that is, by process.<sup>4</sup> In the case of the former "many men are inevitably lost" just as in the case of the latter "much service is lost to Christ through all these lean years of incomplete salvation",<sup>5</sup> though finally, in both cases, we shall view a full salvation. That which is lost is likened unto the branches or twigs of a tree which have fallen away, the elect finally constituting the entire tree and far outnumbering the lost. "There is no antimony, therefore," claims Warfield, "in saying that Christ died for His people and that Christ died for the world. His people may be few today; the world will be His people tomorrow."<sup>6</sup>

In rejecting the paucitas salvandorum doctrine, Warfield is in the company of most of the American and Dutch Calvinists of the 19th century<sup>7</sup> but the precise manner in which he presses the eschatological aspect into service to ease the tension of a limited atonement, seems to be distinctly his own. Charles

(1) The Plan of Salvation, p.104.

(2) "The Expositor", op.cit., p.252; The Plan of Salvation, p.102; The Saviour of the World, p.93.

(3) The Plan of Salvation, p.103.

(4) "The Expositor", op.cit., p.252; Biblical and Theological Studies, p.336; The Saviour of the World, p.97; The Plan of Salvation, p.102.

(5) The Plan of Salvation, p.102.

(6) Ibid., p.104.

(7) R.L. Dabney, W.G.T. Shedd, Charles Hodge, R.J. Breckinridge (Warfield's grandfather), A. Kuyper and H. Bavinck.



Hodge had interpreted Matt. 7:13, 14 as referring to adults only<sup>1</sup> and was accordingly criticized by Warfield; for, having done so, Hodge was led to throw the weight of his doctrine too heavily on the salvation of those that die in infancy.<sup>2</sup> Warfield took Matt. 7:13, 14 as a warning and an exhortation to enter in at the narrow door rather than a statement as to what would be for all time the proportionate number that go in thereat.<sup>3</sup>

Actually, it does not appear that Warfield, notwithstanding his emphasis on the magnitude of redemption and its corporate aspect and his statements to the effect that Christ has propitiated the sin of the whole world and is actually to save the whole world, has departed in essence from Calvin at this point. For Calvin does not allow that the propitiation spoken of in I John 2:2 extends to the reprobate, nor does Warfield. Calvin understands the words "the whole world" to mean the world of the elect<sup>4</sup>, and so does Warfield, though the latter hastens to add that the great magnitude of this body warrants its being termed "the whole world;" indeed it will one day coalesce with the world. The "whole world" then for Warfield does not really mean the whole world in the strictest sense<sup>5</sup> but just substantially the whole world. At this point Warfield's criticism of Calvin might well be applied to his own structure, viz., "When the assumptions on which this view of the passage is founded are scrutinized, however, they cannot be said particularly to commend themselves."<sup>6</sup> Likewise, in criticizing John Cotton for reading a doctrine of limited atonement into I John 2:2 - "This, however, is certainly not what John says" - he must himself submit to this very rapier-like

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(1) Systematic Theology, vol. I, p. 26. Cf. vol. II, p. 648.

(2) Biblical and Theological Studies, p. 350.

(3) Ibid., pp. 340-341.

(4) Cf. Comm. on I John 2:2.

(5) "The Expositor", op. cit., p. 249.

(6) Ibid., p. 244.

thrust, for if the doctrine of limited atonement has its name changed to "definite" atonement and the subjects of it are termed the whole world substantially but not strictly, where are we? We have a less limited atonement perhaps but one still, in principle, limited.

Without going into detail, we note that a similar treatment is given the phrase in Heb.2:9, "... that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man."<sup>1</sup> After insisting that the words "taste death" be taken in a strong rather than weak sense<sup>2</sup> — so strong in fact that the paraphrase is given, "... that by God's grace the bitter pains He suffered in our behalf may be efficacious for the saving of our souls,"<sup>3</sup> — the meaning of the term "every man" is dealt with. In short, "every man" means

"simply the race at large, and its particular form is not intended to distribute the race into its units and to declare that the consummation shall fail for no one of these units; but with the greatest possible energy to assert the racial effect of our Lord's work."<sup>4</sup>

But this is certainly not what the writer to the Hebrews says. Had he wished "to distribute the race into its units" and declare that Christ died for "each and every" man he could have said no more than he did say, namely, that Christ tasted death for every one.

Warfield wishes to identify the "everyone" of verse 9 with the "many sons" of verse 10. Why will not he allow "every one" to mean just everyone and "many sons" to mean many sons? The reason is that due to the lingering rationalism element in his thinking, he has set up for himself a false alternative: either maintain the limited atonement or else forsake evangelicalism and throw part of the weight of man's salvation upon his own shoulders. This comes out clearly in a remark such as: "The refinement of a universal redemption which

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(1) The Saviour of the World, pp.163-188.

(2) Ibid., p.172.

(3) Ibid., p.187.

(4) Ibid., pp.181-182.

does not take universal effect, but hangs for its realization upon a condition to be fulfilled by the redeemed themselves, is foreign to his [the author of Hebrews] whole thought."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, Warfield resorts to his notion of "eschatological" universalism and claims that the author "is speaking in our text [Heb.2:9] ... not of the intention with which Christ died, but of the realization of that intention through the power of the ascended Christ."<sup>2</sup>

It goes without saying that in such a view as we have here in which it is not only believed that the day will come when the whole world will be saved, but also that the result of the entire issue from the beginning will be a multitude of the saved which will dwarf the number of the lost, the hope is extremely futuristic in a teleological sense rather than eschatological sense, for this "fully saved world" is to be present at the parousia.<sup>3</sup> Here is most likely the reason for the very little emphasis the second coming receives throughout the writings of Warfield. It was the long age of the Church stretching before us in time that occupied his attention, and accordingly it comes as no surprise that he thought "true enough" the statement of Wm. Temple's that "the earth will in all probability be inhabitable for myriads of years yet. We are the primitive Church."<sup>4</sup>

What is not so generally perceived in present theological circles friendly to Warfield's teaching of definite atonement is that this eschatology is an integral factor in it. He was convinced that the Reformed Orthodox tradition had not done justice in its exegesis of such texts as John 1:29; I John 2:2; and Heb.2:9 and so he availed himself of this eschatology in order to do so. If then we find his eschatology unacceptable, we are finding unacceptable

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(1) The Saviour of the World, p.180.

(2) Ibid., p.180.

(3) The Plan of Salvation, p.102.

(4) Ibid., pp.111-112.

the very means by which he enabled himself to retain a form of a doctrine of limited atonement in the face of these passages.



## IMPUTATION

"... accepted by God, accruing to their benefit ..."

These words in the *précis* comprise a reference to the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to us, but in examining their precise meaning we are afforded also an opportunity to understand something of how we partake in the curse of original sin since the "three acts of imputation" — (1) the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity; (2) the imputation of the sins of His people to the Redeemer; and (3) the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to His people — are essentially the same act though the thing set to account varies as does the ground in equity on which it is done.<sup>1</sup> With this "setting to account" being viewed as essentially the same in each case, we see that just as Christ bore our sins and yet did not Himself become a sinner, and as we in being justified are not actually pleasing to God in and of ourselves but only as we are "in Christ Jesus,"<sup>2</sup> so also in original sin "it is not the personal ill-desert of Adam's sin that is transferred to us by imputation, but only the law relation to it, not the rectus culpae but only the rectus poenae."<sup>3</sup>

With his belief in the historicity of Adam,<sup>4</sup> Warfield belongs essentially with the Protestant Scholastics and the "Covenant" theologians of the middle seventeenth century in his understanding of imputation.<sup>5</sup> There is a marked difference however: Warfield shows no particular eagerness to set forth in detail the precise sense in which imputation is to be conceived, indeed,

(1) Studies in Theology, p.302.

(2) Perfectionism, vol.II, p.519.

(3) "Union Seminary Review," Feb.1899, p.172.

(4) "The Bible Student and Teacher," vol.VIII, no.4, pp.130ff, (the article, "The Meaning of 'Adam' in the Old Testament").

(5) Studies in Theology, p.306.

if we refuse to base anything on his affinity with Charles Hodge and the Princeton tradition, we must search quite diligently throughout his extant works even to discover where he stood in the American debate on the doctrine. Evidently he is in agreement with the "Federalist" Charles Hodge in adhering to a doctrine of "immediate imputation." Put briefly, it is that "we are burdened with the guilt of Adam's first sin and have received its penalty" because "he was our representative and ... he was constituted our representative because he was our father and was naturally indicated as such for that office."<sup>1</sup>

Having identified this as Warfield's position on imputation, it is only fair to point out that the federalistic or covenant scheme, as a scheme, is not given a place of much importance in his writings. It is not the method of imputation understood with scholastic exactness, but the result of it, that is his main concern. He seemed inclined to push the distinctive features of covenant theology no further than to say that the whole New Testament is instinct with the brotherhood of mankind as "one in origin and in nature, one in need and in the provision of redemption."<sup>2</sup> This is but another example of that rather odd characteristic of his work which, in the face of the overt acknowledgement of the validity of the work and thought of the Protestant Scholastics, shows nevertheless a closer kinship to Calvin himself rather than the Calvinists of the seventeenth century.

As for the "fact" of original sin: the meaning is that all men are burdened with its curse, which for Warfield always includes what he calls adherent and inherent sin, that is to say, both the sinful act of Adam imputed to us and the corrupt, sinful disposition of our souls conveyed to us by the

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(1) Critical Reviews, p.140.

(2) Studies in Theology, p.257.

just judgment of God.<sup>1</sup> Together these two form the ground of our native guilt before God,<sup>2</sup> and the infliction upon us of the threatened penalties.<sup>3</sup>

The question was asked, If this doctrine be so, must we repent then of original sin? The answer is yes; but from Warfield it is given in a dynamic rather than a scholastic context. He wrote, "What he [the truly repentant person] does will seem black enough in his illuminated eyes; what he is will seem blacker. And at the very core of repentance will be his firm determination not only to do better but to be better."<sup>4</sup> It will be noted that this, though not a contradiction of the covenant theology, is nevertheless a definite shift of emphasis.

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(1) "Union Seminary Review," op.cit., p.170. Another way of putting it was to say that sinfulness was part of the penalty for sin (Perfectionism, vol.II, p.157), and this, as we shall note later, formed another line of argument against any severance of sanctification from justification.

(2) Studies in Theology, p.304.

(3) Ibid., p.303.

(4) "Union Seminary Review," op.cit., p.171.

## RELIEF FROM SIN

"By this satisfaction they [His people] are relieved at once from the curse of their guilt as breakers of the law, and from the burden of the law as a condition of life ..."

The two aspects of justification accruing from atonement, according to Warfield's understanding, have already been mentioned, viz., Christ expiates the guilt of our sin and also offers to God a perfect righteousness which the Law demands of us. In consequence, Warfield emphasizes that not only are we relieved once and for all from the curse of guilt — taken out from under the abiding wrath of God,<sup>1</sup> — but also that the life of all those thus relieved is set on an entirely new plane. In this action of God's the matter of the removal of guilt is fundamental for it is "man's sense of enmity with God" which "is the source of all his terror, all his unrest, all his misery."<sup>2</sup> This sense of enmity can really be removed only by the removal of the enmity itself, so that the possession of peace and joy can form an experience from which an argument is made back to the possession of justification.<sup>3</sup> The matter of removing the feeling of guilt was secondary with Warfield to the matter of the removal of guilt itself, and this fact he felt constrained to bring to bear in the form of criticism against both the pietistic evangelicals and the rationalists of his day. When Warfield says "justification by faith" he does not mean that it is through faith that we are enabled to enjoy the sense of pardon, though of course, he acknowledged this in itself to be true; but that "it is through faith that we enter the state of the pardoned ones."<sup>4</sup> In other words, "it is better to be saved than to feel saved."<sup>5</sup>

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.35.

(2) Faith and Life, p.333.

(3) The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.57ff; sermon on Rom.5:1,2.

(4) Perfectionism, vol.II, p.440.

(5) Ibid., p.440; against the mystical perfectionism of Thomas C.Upham.



Warfield argued that in the teaching of rationalists such as Ritschl and Sabatier,<sup>1</sup> sin, guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation were not in the realm of realities, but in that of subjective consciousness.<sup>2</sup> For them there is no essential difference before God between sinners and righteous; and accordingly Ritschl can assign no ground for justification for the simple reason that nothing really happened in justification. The sinner has never been the object of God's disfavour, his sin being esteemed by God only as the stage of his ignorance.<sup>3</sup> His sense of guilt is represented by Ritschl as really just distrust of God, and there is no ground for distrusting God. For Warfield, this argument as much as says that "God does not really forgive our sins; He merely takes no account of them."<sup>4</sup> As such, it obviously forms "a profoundly, immoral doctrine of justification." "It amounts at bottom to an understanding between man and God that bygones shall be bygones, and no questions will be asked."<sup>5</sup>

In bold contrast to this, Warfield himself held that to be relieved from the curse of sin meant to escape the wrath of God,<sup>6</sup> the eschatological wrath (I Thess. 5:9) from which Jesus is the only deliverer (I Thess. 1:10). This wrath is that which now abides,<sup>7</sup> and will be poured out — must be, since God is a "conscientious" God<sup>8</sup> — on the unrighteous. The core of the Gospel consists "in the simple proclamation of Jesus, our deliverer from the coming wrath — of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us that

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(1) Cf. Critical Reviews, pp. 106-112.

(2) Perfectionism, vol. I, p. 57.

(3) Ibid., p. 57.

(4) Ibid., p. 61.

(5) Ibid., p. 63.

(6) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p. 189.

(7) Biblical Doctrines, p. 56.

(8) Faith and Life, p. 444; Perfectionism, vol. I, p. 44.

should live with Him ..."<sup>1</sup>

Underlying this mode of thinking is the basal conception of the state of men at large as condemned sinners before an angry God.<sup>2</sup> "Those who do not obtain salvation remain under the wrath of God; and the condition of man wherefrom he requires salvation is therefore a condition of wrath-deserving sin."<sup>3</sup> Warfield complained that in many quarters it had evidently been forgotten that sin was wrong,<sup>4</sup> and that it was therefore not wrong that sin should be punished; or even stronger, it was wrong if sin should go unpunished.<sup>5</sup> He held that forgiveness, per se, that is, without expiation, is wrong;<sup>6</sup> and suggested that the neglect of this truth explained the restlessness of many minds before the doctrine of everlasting punishment. Hell was conceived more

"as a corrupting sore in the universe rather than God's prison house for justly punished men." "It is at least worth while," he wrote, "to try the effect on current thought of laying more stress on the guilt of sin and on the infliction of penalty in the future, rather than on the self-propagating power of evil and on the effects of an eternal freedom of restraint upon evil men, when removed from all good influences and allowed to interact upon one another for all evil."<sup>7</sup>

This tide of neglect of the guilt of sin which Warfield sought to stem, was of course the result of tendencies which has been in motion for some time. The pantheizing spirit of immanent idealism stemming from Hegel commended a blending of humanity and God, and with the distinction between special and general revelation torn down, man became the measure of God. If men can forgive one another without requiring satisfaction, then it is a sub-human view of God which does not admit that He can do as much. The love of God was

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(1) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.187.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p.54.

(3) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.189.

(4) Perfectionism, vol.II, p.165, vs. C.Finney; Perfectionism, vol.I, p.56 vs. A.Ritschl.

(5) Perfectionism, vol.I, p.64.

(6) Perfectionism, vol.II, p.165.

(7) "Presbyterian and Reformed Review", vol.IX, p.510.

emphasized to the exclusion of His righteous wrath; He had, as it were, a heart but no conscience. This, coupled with Ritschl's contention that it was impossible for God "to love" and "to hate" the same person at the same time — a contention which Warfield perceived to lie at the very root of his whole system,<sup>1</sup> — resulted in a concept of God from which all notions of wrath, against sinners as such, were purged away.

Consequently Warfield felt constrained to emphasize God's holiness and justice, or as he sometimes called it, the "conscientiousness" of God. It is, after all, a conception peculiar to the religion of the Bible. "None of the gods of the nations was like unto our God in this [in holiness], the crown and climax of His glory."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it is preëminently this holiness which constitutes the terror of the Lord.<sup>3</sup> To the sinful man, no words so quickly spring to the lips when brought in sight of holiness as "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The All-Father notion of God is not even a Christian one, for such a God could not be a moral being.<sup>4</sup> It comes rather from the sphere of natural religion and only voices "the yearning of the human heart to find in its Creator and Ruler something more than a Master or a Sovereign Lord."<sup>5</sup> Men have framed for themselves a benevolent God; but a thoroughly honest and conscientious God who acts accordingly with respect to Himself and to us, this has been left for the revelation of God himself to give us and remains the distinguishing characteristic of the God of revelation.<sup>6</sup> In it lies, "perhaps the deepest ground of the necessity of an

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(1) Perfectionism, vol.I, p.93.

(2) Faith and Life, p.444.

(3) Ibid., p.445.

(4) Perfectionism, vol.I, p.64.

(5) Faith and Life, p.450. Cf. Studies in Theology, p.294.

(6) Studies in Theology, p.296; Faith and Life, p.444.

expiatory atonement,"<sup>1</sup> for the Bible "represents God as sheerly unable to forgive sin on any other ground whatever."<sup>2</sup>

It is easy to understand how from this point of view Warfield insisted that justification must be based on an act of expiation and that consequently the seriousness of the guilt, power, and corruption of sin must be confronted. From the many passages of his works that could be quoted the following will serve to illustrate the typical tenor of his criticism:

"Conscientiousness commends itself only to awakened conscience; and in much of recent theologizing conscience does not seem especially active. Nothing indeed, is more startling in the structure of recent theories of atonement, than the apparently vanishing sense of sin that underlies them. Surely, it is only where the sense of guilt of sin has grown grievously faint, that men can suppose repentance to be all that is needed to purge it. Surely it is only where the sense of power of sin has profoundly decayed, that men can fancy that they can at will cast it off from them in a 'revolutionary repentance.' Surely it is only where the sense of sin has practically passed away, that men can imagine that the holy and just God can deal with it lightly. If we have not much to be saved from, why, certainly, a very little atonement will suffice for our needs. It is, after all, only the sinner that requires a Saviour. But if we are sinners, and in proportion as we know ourselves to be sinners, and appreciate what it means to be sinners, we will cry out for that Saviour who only after He was perfected by suffering, could become the Author of eternal salvation."<sup>3</sup>

Throughout his discussions in reference to sin, Warfield insists on the recognition of essentially two aspects, guilt and pollution.<sup>4</sup> Occasionally, as in the above quotation, he speaks of the enervating power of it as though it were to be considered alongside these two, and occasionally the element of bondage to Satan is mentioned,<sup>5</sup> but most generally these are subsidiary

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(1) Studies in Theology, p.296.

(2) Perfectionism, vol.II, p.165; Perfectionism, vol.I, p.165.

(3) Studies in Theology, pp.296f.

(4) Perfectionism, vol.II, p.477; The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.189; Critical Reviews, p.131.

(5) Faith and Life, pp.169,177.



aspects to the two main ones of guilt and pollution.<sup>1</sup> This twofold aspect of sin is directly related to the twofold aspect, mentioned before, of the satisfaction of Christ accomplished, and consequently to the double benefit to be had in justification. These twin lines of thought are to be seen also in Warfield's discussion on the nature of holiness.<sup>2</sup> Holiness not only has its negative sense of separation from all that is unclean and evil but also a positive sense which is very difficult to express. Actually, "there is no idea so positive as that of holiness"<sup>3</sup> and for that very reason we must fall back on a negative description of it.

The work of Christ, however, is the sole ground of our acceptance with God both in respect to the negative and positive aspects of God's holiness and in respect to the guilt and pollution factors of our sin.<sup>4</sup> Not only does He pay the penalty of our guilt but He offers to God His own perfect righteousness which relieves us from the burden of working our own. The atonement is thus an act of God's which cuts completely across the life of the believer, setting it on an entirely different plane. He has a new condition of life; grace rather than law. He is not relieved from the task of holy living but this task is to be carried out in a wholly new setting. It is not undertaken in order to be right with God but ~~is done~~ because God in Christ has once and for all put us right with Himself.

Evangelical Christians, Warfield taught, do not suppose that the fact that they are reconciled to God implies their perfection. "They think of Christ, and

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(1) Cf. Faith and Life, p.177 where Warfield implies that it is by virtue of our guilt that we are held in bondage to Satan and The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.189 it is said that the pollution of sin produces inability.

(2) Faith and Life, pp.440-447; Sermon on I Peter 1:15.

(3) Ibid., p.443.

(4) Perfectionism, vol.II, pp.518f, 377,512.

(5) Faith and Life, pp.321-325,397,407; The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.210-212; Counterfeit Miracles, p.266; The Saviour of the World, p.144.

suppose that the satisfaction of God is with Him as Redeemer, rather than with them, the redeemed."<sup>1</sup> Far from thinking that God is pleased with them as they are, they suppose, on the contrary, that God is so little satisfied with what the soul is that He does not intend to leave it in that condition. Thus room is left for a serious doctrine of sanctification while synergism is absolutely excluded in the matter of justification.

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(1) Perfectionism, vol.I, p.10..

## THE CROSS AS REVELATION AND INFLUENCE

"... To carry home to the hearts of men a profound sense of the indefectible righteousness of God and to make to them a perfect revelation of His love."

The statement of the influence wrought by the sacrifice of Christ is significant first of all from the standpoint of the position it is accorded. It follows the exposition of the "objective" element of the work of Christ and is contingent upon it. The Cross possesses a strong moral influence,<sup>1</sup> indeed nothing is capable of any stronger influence than the Cross;<sup>2</sup> but the so-called "moral influence" theories of the atonement were at fault in exalting this aspect to the exclusion of the fact of expiation and in doing so had emptied the atonement of the very heart by virtue of which it possesses any moral influence at all.

"The crucifixion was a shameful murder;" he wrote, "it did accomplish a glorious martyrdom of the Son of God [the philosophy of Gen. 50:20 must be kept in mind];<sup>3</sup> it does flash into the awakened hearts of men the blissful conviction that God loves them; it does warn us all that He is a God that hates sin and cannot look upon iniquity. But it is all these only because all these are not all that it is. It can be all these only because behind and above them all the cross is something more — the altar on which our sacrifice was offered as a propitiation for our sins."<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted that the influence which is wrought in the heart of a believer by the atonement does not have, in itself, saving significance; for the Gospel announces a "completed salvation."<sup>5</sup> "It does not come to us to make known to us what we must do to earn salvation for ourselves, but proclaiming to us what Jesus has done to save us."<sup>6</sup> God's favour is not secured by

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(1) The Saviour of the World, p.266; Studies in Theology, p.112.

(2) The Saviour of the World, p.266.

(3) Critical Reviews, p.201. Parenthesis ours.

(4) "Christ Our Sacrifice," Opuscula I.

(5) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.52.

(6) Ibid., p.50.

our reaction to the atonement but by the atonement itself;<sup>1</sup> and accordingly Warfield places as an antithesis to works, not faith, but grace;<sup>2</sup> and "grace is a thing that cannot be commanded by the fulfilment of conditions."<sup>3</sup>

In the affirmation that the atonement forces upon our minds the fact of both God's righteousness and His love, we see coming to light again the paradoxical character of Warfield's teaching mentioned previously. To many of Warfield's contemporaries, the satisfaction doctrine of the atonement amounted to a denial of the love of God and could be held only at the expense of renouncing grace itself. To Warfield himself this nowhere appears to be a problem. There is a mystery present in the atonement, but we must not try to resolve this paradox or wash it away, for it is by this very fact that we have revealed to us God as both righteous and loving. In this connection, the following passage is precisely to the point:

"The mystery of grace resides just in the impulse of a sin-hating God to show mercy to such guilty wretches; and the supreme revelation of God as the God of holy love is made in the disclosure of the mode of His procedure in redemption by which alone He might remain just while justifying the ungodly. For in this procedure there was involved the mighty paradox of the infinitely just Judge Himself becoming the sinner's substitute before His own law and the infinitely blessed God receiving in His own person the penalty of sin."<sup>4</sup>

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(1) Perfectionism, vol.II, p.609.

(2) Ibid., p.608.

(3) Ibid., p.609.

(4) Studies in Theology, p.112; Cf. The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.127.



## RECONCILIATION

"God is reconciled to us and we ... are reconciled to God ..."

Warfield's understanding of the doctrine of reconciliation, like most of his theology, is fully appreciated only by keeping well in mind the thought dominant in the period in which he laboured. Adolf Harnack had written, for instance, that the Gospel as Jesus proclaimed it pertained to the Father alone, not the Son;<sup>1</sup> and that Christ's service "had the single object of convincing sinners that forgiving Love is mightier than the Justice before which they tremble. If they believe this they are reconciled ..."<sup>2</sup> This was extremely objectionable to Warfield as was also the similar position of Auguste Sabatier who had written, "There is no atonement other than repentance."<sup>3</sup> And further: "Jesus had no need to influence God, whose love has taken and forever retains the initiative of forgiveness. God has no need to be brought back to man and reconciled with him;"<sup>4</sup> to which Warfield comments significantly, "Christ's entire work consists, therefore, in reconciling man to God, 'in bringing about in the individual and in humanity the state of repentance in which alone the forgiveness of the Father can become effective.'"<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand there were those who in quite a different atmosphere were subverting the Reformation doctrine — a host of pietists among the American Methodists and the New England Congregationalists, and others influenced by the thought of men like Charles Finney. To Warfield, Finney's "reformation of life," while not held to be the ground of God's impulse to justify, nevertheless

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(1) What is Christianity?, p.144.

(2) The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, A Theological Symposium, p.123.

(3) The Doctrine of Atonement and Its Historical Evolution, p.127, quoted by Warfield, Critical Reviews, p.110.

(4) Op.cit., p.125, quoted by Warfield, Critical Reviews, p.109.

(5) Critical Reviews, p.109. Inner quote by Warfield from Sabatier, op.cit., p.126.

amounted to the ground of God's actually justifying the sinner. It held for Finney the same place as the righteousness of Christ held in the Reformation doctrine of justification.<sup>1</sup> In such matters it was all but axiomatic with Warfield that "God is the agent, Christ the ground, faith the instrument by which God saves on the ground of Christ's righteousness;"<sup>2</sup> and the resulting polemic determines to a large degree the phraseology in which reconciliation is expressed by him.

In discussing this doctrine Warfield is concerned with the whole New Testament teaching of redemption from sin and is not to be thought of simply as giving an exegesis of the few texts (Matt.5:24, Rom.5:10, I Cor.7:11, II Cor.5:18-20) in which forms of διαλλάσσω and καταλλάσσω appear, except in so far as these texts themselves contain implicitly the entire New Testament teaching. In the matter of reconciliation there is enmity to be considered both on the part of God toward sinful man and on the part of man toward God,<sup>3</sup> but this dual enmity, and its removal, forms a pattern which is by no means symmetrical. As always, it is God's attitude toward man rather than man's attitude toward God that is fundamental to Warfield. The most disturbing thing is that "God is at enmity with man: that His wrath is revealed from heaven against their abounding unrighteousness."<sup>4</sup> And in consequence of this, the fundamental act in reconciliation is God's act, indeed this is the "word of reconciliation": "that this enmity [God's] has been removed, that this wrath has been appeased and that by God Himself, who has reconciled us with Himself through Christ, by making Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, — and enabling

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(1) Perfectionism, vol.II, p.154. Cf. Perfectionism, vol.II, pp.155-156 where Warfield quotes Finney's express rejection of the doctrine of justification by faith as understood by Luther and the Reformation.

(2) "Princeton Theological Review," I, p.675.

(3) The Saviour of the World, p.148.

(4) Ibid., p.148.

Himself not to impute our trespasses to us."<sup>1</sup> It will be noted that Warfield speaks of "a reconciled God"<sup>2</sup> and of the fact "that the righteous wrath of God against sin has been appeased and the face of God has been turned to us again clothed in a smile of favor."<sup>3</sup> These expressions cannot be taken in a Pelagian sense any more than can those found in connection with his doctrine of propitiation and sacrifice, for here too is to be seen in the immediate context the unqualified assertion that God is the sole author of the action.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, it is not an action done without us to which we, in our sovereign freedom, must give validity, each for his own person. No thought appeared to ~~displease~~ ~~to the dislike of~~ Warfield more than that which pictured the reconciliation with God to depend on the unmoved action of our own free-will so that "all of God's action looking to our salvation must wait upon it."<sup>5</sup>

In keeping with his keen awareness of the heinousness of sin, especially in the sense of guilt, Warfield points out that the effect of God's reconciling action is "the non-imputation of men's trespasses to them,"<sup>6</sup> and the ground for this action is the "sin-bearing of Christ" — "Him who knew no sin He made sin for us, that we may be the righteousness of God in Him."<sup>7</sup> (II Cor.5:21). Thus substitution is at the heart of reconciliation.<sup>8</sup>

All of this, it might be objected, amounts to the reconciliation of God to man on the basis of the death of Christ whereas what we meet in the famous passage (II Cor.5:18-20) is not that God reconciled Himself to man but that He reconciled man to Himself. Warfield claimed, however, that the traditional

(1) The Saviour of the World, pp.148-149.

(2) Ibid., pp.149-150.

(3) Ibid., p. 150.

(4) Cf. Ibid., p. 147.

(5) Ibid., p. 146.

(6) Ibid., p. 150, cf. p. 147.

(7) Ibid., p. 148.

(8) Ibid., p. 152.

reading, due to "the shortcomings of our English version," was misleading.

It was not the reconciliation of man to God but the reconciliation of God to man which is spoken of — "a reconciliation which God has Himself undertaken and which He has accomplished at the tremendous cost of the death of His Son, on the ground of which He is able to release men from their trespasses."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the ministry of reconciliation embraces the announcement that God in Christ had done it all. Jesus has taken our place and borne in His own body on the tree all our iniquities. "He has died our death: and grants us His righteousness that hereafter we may live and live to Him."<sup>2</sup>

This does not mean that because God in Christ has done it there is nothing left for us to do. True, until Jesus died for us there was nothing for us to do but to die.<sup>3</sup> But now that He has died for us, we can work our salvation out in newness of life. In a sermon on II Cor. 5:14, 15, 18, 19, 21,<sup>4</sup> the fact that Christ has been made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him constitutes a great declaration which induces our action in fear and trembling.<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt that this new life of righteousness will be forthcoming, for those for whom Christ has died (and who therefore have died with Him) are a "new creation;" and "a new creation is not a self-made thing, which waits upon our own choice, whether it is made or not; but a product of the almighty power of God."<sup>6</sup>

There is little doubt but that Werffeld comes dangerously close to pushing a transactional view of substitution and atonement to the point at which the reality of the act of faith is nullified. To say, as he does<sup>7</sup> that "those for

(1) The Saviour of the World, p.148.

(2) Ibid., p.154.

(3) Ibid., p.155.

(4) Ibid., pp.151-160.

(5) Ibid., p.157.

(6) Ibid., p.156.

(7) Ibid., pp.155-156.



whom Christ has died ... are 'a new creation,' without any mention of faith or repentance is not only to root out of salvation any act of man but also to minimize to a great extent — and possibly even rule out altogether — the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation. It would seem that the third person of the Trinity has no real share in salvation itself but only brings the elect to the knowledge of the fact that they have been saved and presses home to them the exhortation, "Seeing that you are a new creation, live as becomes those who are a new creation."<sup>1</sup> This would mean that repentance and faith were but a sham and consequently the call to repentance and faith a farce.

Warfield does not actually go this far, however. It will be noted that the sermon referred to does not pretend to expound the 20th verse of II Cor. 5 in which Paul's great call to faith, "be ye reconciled to God," is contained. Most probably it was addressed to an audience of professing Christians where the matter of belief in Christ was presupposed, for elsewhere we are told that the phrase "be reconciled to" means not "lay aside your enmity towards," but "obtain the forgiveness of."<sup>2</sup> Nothing could be further from the purpose of Warfield than to teach that faith and repentance are no more than the means by which one enjoys the sense of pardon. On the contrary, the factor of primary significance in faith is that through it we enter into the actual state of the pardoned ones.<sup>3</sup> An exact parallel to II Cor. 5:20 is I Cor. 7:11 in which the wife who had left her husband is told either to remain unmarried or to obtain her husband's forgiveness — "Get restored to his favour."<sup>4</sup> Matt. 5:24 formed another link in the argument, for here "Get reconciled to thy brother" means "Go to thy offended brother and get his forgiveness;" and by

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(1) The Saviour of the World, p. 157.

(2) "Princeton Theological Review", I, p. 675.

(3) Perfectionism, vol. II, p. 440.

(4) "Princeton Theological Review", I, p. 675.

the same token, "Get reconciled to God"<sup>1</sup> means "Go to thy offended God, and in His own offered way get His acceptance."<sup>2</sup>

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(1) II Cor.5:20.

(2) Warfield repeats these arguments with approval from Bishop H.C.G. Moule's tract "Justification by Faith". ("Princeton Theological Review, I, p.675). Actually the root words are different, καταλάσσω in Corinthian passage and διαλάσσω in Matt.5:24, but Warfield held the two have been used interchangeably in the New Testament. Büchsel points out in Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Band I that διαλλαγήναι represents a laying aside of mutual enmity in which both parties have equal part (p.253). This brings to mind also the fact that in the case of reconciliation between men (Matt.5:24), it is the offender who makes restitution to the offended; while in the case of reconciliation between man and God, it is God, the offended, who removes the obstacle of sin. Warfield, in his eagerness to press Matt.5:24 into service as an argument against the Ritschlian view of reconciliation, does not maintain sufficiently the distinction between the reconciliation of man to man, and of man to God. As to the essence of his doctrine, however, this criticism is immaterial.

## PEACE WITH GOD

"... So making peace ..."

To have peace with God means the same thing for Warfield as to be reconciled to God, and here too, it is the objective, or as he calls it, the "external peace between an angry God and sinful men," which precedes and is fundamental to the subjective or "internal peace in the response of the human conscience."<sup>1</sup> Christianity does not come crying peace, peace, when there is no peace; it comes, rather, recognizing the enmity and leaving an adequate foundation for peace.<sup>2</sup> It preaches Christ who has "abolished," "slain" this enmity on His cross, "reconciling" us with God by His propitiatory work. As a result He has made "peace" (Eph.2:18), and therefore is called "our peace", and His Gospel, "the Gospel of peace" (Rom.10:15; Eph.6:15). His whole work was "that we might have peace in Him" (John 16:33), and His Gospel consisted in "preaching peace by Jesus" (Acts 10:36). In the Old Testament prophecy He is promised as the "Prince of Peace" (Isa.9:6), and is such because the "chastisement of our peace was upon Him" (Isa.53:5); "in other words," comments Warfield in conclusion of the sermonic passage from which we have drawn the above summary, "because that punishment by which our sins are expiated and we are reconciled with God should be borne by Him."<sup>3</sup>

We can have that "peace from God" (Rom.1:7) which Jesus gives (John 16:27), and which passes all understanding (Phil.4:7), only on the grounds of the "peace with God" in which "our real and actual separation from God is bridged by the blood of Christ."<sup>4</sup> This external peace with God which Christ accomplishes by His atonement is an objective "transaction;"<sup>5</sup> nevertheless

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(1) Studies in Theology, p.278.

(2) Faith and Life, p.334.

(3) Ibid., p.327.

(4) Ibid., p.329.

(5) Ibid., p.329.

through the medium of the human conscience it bears more than a mere forensic relation to us. In his conscience man is out of joint with himself, but terrors of conscience are not ultimate. They point upwards to a higher Power and, as such, "conscience is the voice of God proclaiming war in man; and through it man knows that he is not at peace with God."<sup>1</sup> The Christian message takes men, men who have not only turned from God but seek to turn from their sense of enmity with Him,<sup>2</sup> and makes them recognize their condemnation and at the same time shows them the provision for its reversal.<sup>3</sup>

Only by this method can true inward peace be found; for a deep moral self-condemnation cries out for satisfaction. No moral deduction can persuade it that forgiveness of sin is a necessary element in the moral order of the world, for it knows on the contrary that indiscriminate forgiveness of sin would be precisely the subversion of the moral order of the world. The annulment of guilt is the annulment of the law of righteousness, out of the breach of which guilt arises; and the law of righteousness is only another name for the moral order of the world.<sup>4</sup>

"There is a moral paradox in the forgiveness of sins which cannot be solved apart from the exhibition of an actual expiation. No appeal to general metaphysical or moral truths concerning God can serve here; or to the essential kinship of human nature to God; or, for the matter of that, to any example of an attitude of trust in the divine goodness upon the part of a religious genius, however great, or to promises of forgiveness made by such a one, or even — may we say it with reverence — made by God Himself, unsupported by the exhibition of an actual expiation."<sup>5</sup>

Warfield did not deny that perhaps the sense of guilt could be temporarily lulled to sleep with platitudes about the goodness of God,<sup>6</sup> nor that, on the

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- (1) Faith and Life, p.332.
  - (2) Ibid., p.333.
  - (3) Ibid., p.334.
  - (4) Christology and Criticism, p.340.
  - (5) Ibid., p.340.
  - (6) Christology and Criticism, p.339.



other hand, one who was truly justified could lose his inward peace.<sup>1</sup> He did maintain, however, that both were conditions without foundations and therefore could not last.<sup>2</sup>

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(1) Faith and Life, p.338.

(2) The Saviour of the World, p.151.

## ETERNAL SALVATION AND HISTORICAL ATONEMENT

Though it is not explicitly mentioned in the *précis*, it seems advisable to bring together certain lines of Warfield's thought on the relation of the historical element to the eternal in the matter of forgiveness.

(1) Basic is the fact of the finality of Calvary in the historical sense; that is to say, the atonement is essentially a Godward expiation for sin. "And expiation, in its very nature, is not a principle but a fact, an event which takes place, if at all, in the conditions of time and space."<sup>1</sup> Sin is met then in the Christian message not with general truths concerning love and mercy, but with an actual historical expiation of human sin.

(2) This historical action of Christ is thought of as the execution in time of the "great design, framed in eternity by Triune Godhead."<sup>2</sup> Our Lord did not come down from heaven for the wonder of men but, as He said, "in order that I may do the will of Him that sent me."<sup>3</sup> The eternal covenant which lies back of these words (John 6:38-39) is a plan born of the infinite compassion of the Triune God according to which each person executes His appointed part.<sup>4</sup> This is the old Reformed notion of the Covenant of Redemption, and of course cannot exist in conjunction with any unitarian denial of the pre-existence of the Son for "the grace that was given us before all eternity, was given us in that eternity in Christ Jesus."<sup>5</sup> So inseparably joined in thought is the work to the person of Christ that we see Warfield, in at least two sermons<sup>6</sup> in which the topics of eternal salvation and election are discussed,

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(1) Christology and Criticism, p.340.

(2) The Saviour of the World, p.239.

(3) Ibid., p.221.

(4) Ibid., p.229.

(5) Faith and Life, p.410.

(6) Ibid., pp.402-414, "The Eternal Gospel," II Tim.1:9,10; The Saviour of the World, pp.216-244, "The Gospel of the Covenant," John 6:38,39.

embarking on what otherwise would be an uncalled for argument for the real pre-existence of the Son.

(3) The expiation wrought out in time and space at Calvary is not set in opposition to God's eternal graciousness toward sinful man, for the work of Christ, as well as the work of the Holy Ghost, is the "pure outflow of the incredible love of God."<sup>1</sup> "In the depths of eternity our foreseen miseries were a cause of care to Him."<sup>2</sup> In this love — holy love which "turns from the sight of sin with inexpressible abhorrence, and burned against it with unquenchable indignation"<sup>3</sup> — the "determining transaction in heaven"<sup>4</sup> was made according to which the impetration of redemption is allotted to the Son; and to the Holy Ghost, the application of that redemption.<sup>5</sup> Grace was actually given to us in eternity (II Tim.1: 9,10), though not apart from, but rather in Christ Jesus;<sup>6</sup> which means, for Warfield, not just Christ simpliciter but Christ crucified and raised again.<sup>7</sup> In this sense, Christ, on the ground of His historical work, is the eternal mediator of grace.<sup>8</sup> There was no time when salvation was not.<sup>9</sup>

It is often thought that a strong emphasis upon the historical expiation wrought on Calvary makes the problem of relating it to God's eternal graciousness more acute; at least this was termed a problem by many nineteenth century theologians who minimized the "objective" element in atonement in favour of the moral influence theories. Warfield, however, insists that it

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(1) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.137.

(2) The Saviour of the World, p.234.

(3) Studies in Theology, p.296.

(4) Faith and Life, p.411.

(5) The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.136f.

(6) Faith and Life, p.407.

(7) The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.45,188; Studies in Theology, p.293; Critical Reviews, p.401; The Saviour of the World, p.88; Faith and Life, p.380.

(8) Faith and Life, p. 410.

(9) Ibid., p.413.

is only by means of affirming the objective factor that the problem ceases. Far from affirming that the crucifixion represents the point in history at which God becomes propitious toward man, he argues: since the work of Christ is really God taking our place "before His own outraged justice and under His perfect law,"<sup>1</sup> then He can grant peace and forgiveness in prospect of it as well as retrospect;<sup>2</sup> but if the work of Christ is thought of solely as some sort of demonstration designed to induce repentance in man, then in the face of the fact that the Old Testament saints exercised saving faith in God prior to Calvary, it must be admitted that Christ died in vain.<sup>3</sup>

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(1) The Saviour of the World, p.238.

(2) Critical Reviews, p.210.

(3) "Princeton Theological Review," I, p.158; Critical Reviews, p.210.



## THE ATONEMENT AND THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

"The Spirit bought for us ..."

In accordance with the "Covenant Theology," Warfield teaches that just as in the fall Adam lost his original righteousness, he forfeited also the possession of the Holy Spirit by whose inward operation he withstood temptation.<sup>1</sup> The depravation recorded in Romans 1 is result of this deprivation of the Holy Ghost's influences. The restoration of the Spirit to man is effected by God upon the foundation of the atoning work of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Christ is spoken of as having purchased by His satisfaction not only release from the dominion of sin but also a title to holiness, "together with the only prevalent instrument of sanctification, the Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup>

While maintaining that the Spirit was active in Old Testament times in all the modes of His activities under the New,<sup>4</sup> Warfield looks upon the earthly ministry of Christ as ushering in the New Dispensation, which by way of discrimination, is the Dispensation of the Spirit.<sup>5</sup> This is but the fulfillment of the Messianic promise in which the recreative activity of the Spirit of God is thought of as the crowning Messianic blessing (Isa.32:15, 34:16, 54:3), and according to which the Messiah Himself was to be endowed with the Spirit above measure (Isa.11:2, 42:1, 61:1).<sup>6</sup> Jesus, then, is seen to begin His ministry as the dispenser of the Spirit (Matt.3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33), and in so doing to possess the distinction that whereas John could baptize only with water, He baptized with the Holy Spirit: "the repentance which was symbolized by the one was wrought by the

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(1) Faith and Life, p.136.

(2) Ibid., p.137.

(3) Critical Reviews, p.131.

(4) Faith and Life, p.135.

(5) Ibid., p.136.

(6) Biblical Doctrines, p.445.

other."<sup>1</sup>

Though Warfield does not seem to make a great deal of this teaching of the Holy Spirit's being purchased by the death of Christ — he nowhere gives an elaborate discussion of the doctrine — we see, nevertheless, that it is an integral factor in giving the principle of election consistent expression throughout his soteriology. Since the "precondition" of entrance into the Kingdom of God is a radical repentance and regeneration,<sup>2</sup> and since man is ex hypothesi incapable in his sin-bred inability of responding, in a saving act of faith and repentance, to even the inducements brought to bear on him from the Cross, it follows that he needs not merely inducements to action but recreating grace, and an atonement which purchases for him the recreating Spirit as well as the proffer of mercy.<sup>3</sup> Thus by the Holy Spirit which is "shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:6),<sup>4</sup> faith is bound to the person and work of Christ.<sup>5</sup> To them whom the Father has given to the Son (John 4:39), faith has been granted in the behalf of Christ.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, believers are conceived as "the elect of God who believe because God has bought them by the precious blood of His Son."<sup>7</sup>

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.446.

(2) Ibid., p.447.

(3) Critical Reviews, p.210.

(4) Faith and Life, p.399.

(5) Critical Reviews, p.203.

(6) The Saviour of the World, p.238.

(7) Critical Reviews, p.203.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

## THE APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION

## INTRODUCTION

In speaking of the "application" of redemption,<sup>1</sup> Warfield has reference not only to the realization of that salvation which Christ "procured"<sup>2</sup> "objectively"<sup>3</sup> in His death on the cross, but even more fundamentally to the realization of God's eternal decree. "Ideally," writes Warfield,

"all of Christ's children were saved before the foundation of the world, when they were set upon by God's love, and given by the Father to the Son to be saved by Him. Objectively they were saved when Christ died for them on the tree, purchasing them to Himself by His own precious blood. This salvation was made their personal possession in principle when they were regenerated by the Holy Spirit, purchased for them by the death of Christ in their behalf. It was made over to them judicially on their believing in Christ, in the power of the Holy Ghost thus given to them. But it is completed in them in its full effects only when at the Judgment Day they stand, sanctified souls, clothed in glorified bodies, before the throne of God, meet for the inheritance of the saints of light."<sup>4</sup>

Before attempting to treat Warfield's thought on such matters as effectual calling, repentance, and faith, it is necessary, as the above statement would indicate, to understand his doctrine of predestination and election. Even though the doctrine of the atonement, as we have observed, is strongly conditioned by it, still Warfield himself set predestination at the head of those

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(1) Critical Reviews, p.460; The Plan of Salvation, p.69; The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.136. N.B., Though strictly speaking the application of redemption is salvation (cf. Studies in Theology, p.44), the terms redemption and salvation are often used interchangeably by Warfield.

(2) Critical Reviews, p.460.

(3) Counterfeit Miracles, p.176.

(4) Ibid., p.176.

doctrines dealing with the application of redemption,<sup>1</sup> so for this reason we present it here at the beginning of this last chapter.

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(1) Critical Reviews, p.460. Here Warfield is engaged in reviewing some articles from Hastings' Dictionary of the Apostolic Church (Critical Reviews, pp.453-464). The review is of considerable interest to us not merely for what Warfield says concerning the articles but also from the pattern of arrangement he gives to those articles he has chosen to review. After reviewing an article on "Scripture" he turns to a group "dealing with the procuring of salvation," viz., "Saviour," "Mediator," "Ransom," "Sacrifice," "Propitiation," "Reconciliation," and "Righteousness." From this group he turns to those in which the application of redemption is expounded. "At the head of these," he writes, "stands the late Professor T. Nicol's (of Aberdeen) excellent article on "Predestination." Warfield then goes on to review the following articles: "Repentance," "Union with God," "Regeneration," "Sanctification," and "Perfection." He concludes by singling out several more on topics which fall "into the eschatological field:" "Resurrection," "Parousia," "Paradise," and "New Jerusalem." The position of predestination in this arrangement is significant. Calvin does not introduce his discussion of predestination in the Institutes until near the end of Book III after he has discussed the person and work of Christ as well as the doctrines of faith and the Christian life. On the other hand, Charles Hodge treats predestination in the first volume of his three volume work Systematic Theology under the doctrine of God. In placing the topic of predestination under the heading of the Application of Redemption Warfield is much closer to Calvin than to Hodge, although within this group Warfield places it at the beginning whereas Calvin places it at the end (but for the doctrine of the resurrection).



## PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION

## General Characteristics

The idea of predestination was held by Professor Warfield to be fundamental to the whole religious consciousness of the Biblical writers, and to be so involved in all their religious conceptions that to eradicate it would be to transform the entire Scriptural representation of God.<sup>1</sup> In the article "Predestination," written for A Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings,<sup>2</sup> Warfield gives what might be considered a definitive expression of this doctrine as he conceives it. Though the subject is broached in this article primarily from the standpoint of the doctrine of God, tracing the notion of predestination through the Old Testament, the post-canonical Jewish writings, and the New Testament, Warfield is careful to remind his readers that the Bible, being fundamentally a soteriological book, is primarily concerned with the revelation of the grace of God to sinners. It is therefore soteriological predestination, or in other words, Divine Election, that is in the foreground and only at a somewhat late period is general predestination made the subject of speculative discussion.<sup>3</sup> To be precise, however, election is but the particular instance of the fact of general predestination.<sup>4</sup> Even so, providentia generalis is not thought of as mechanical and purposeless. It was not simply of sparrows that Jesus was thinking when He adverted to the care of the heavenly Father for them; it was that they who are of more value than sparrows might learn with what confidence they might depend on the Father's hand.<sup>5</sup> In fact, at no point does Warfield ever think of God's whole plan for

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- (1) Biblical Doctrines, p.7.  
 (2) Pp.47-63, reprinted in Ibid., pp.3-67.  
 (3) Ibid., p.13.  
 (4) Ibid., p.22.  
 (5) Ibid., p.33.

the universe in isolation from His purpose to recover sinful man to Himself.<sup>1</sup>

### Summary of the Old Testament Teaching

Throughout the Old Testament, God is pictured as an Omnipotent Person,<sup>2</sup> and though startling anthropomorphisms were used as a mode of conceiving Him, the corrective lay always at hand in the accompanying sense of His immeasurable exaltation by which He was removed above all weaknesses of humanity.<sup>3</sup> Jehovah is not only the Creator but also the irresistible Ruler and King over all that He has made so that His will is the ultimate account of all that occurs. This is the reason why the lot was an accepted means of obtaining the decision of God. "The winds are His messengers, the flaming fire His servant: every natural occurrence is His act: prosperity is His gift, and if calamity falls upon man it is the Lord that has done it." (Amos 3:5,6; Lam.3:33-38; Isa. 67:7; Eccl. 7:14; Isa. 54:16.)<sup>4</sup>

So sharply is this view expressed in the Old Testament that at times it appears that everything is ascribed to His immediate production to the point of negating the real activity of second causes. God is not conceived of, however, in any such quasi-Pantheistic sense but rather as a free personality. Second causes are fully recognized though not conceived of as independent of God: they are the expression of His stated will.<sup>5</sup> Man, however, is the true author of his acts (hence God's proving of man, Gen.22:1; Ex.16:4, 20:20; Deut.18:2,16, 13:3; Judges 3:1,4; II Cor.32:31), but the governing hand of God is seen behind all proximate causes. Consequently the government of the universe is looked

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.23. Cf. Studies in Theology, p.128; Opuscula, VII, 1, p.59; pamphlet "Election," p.1, and throughout.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p.7.

(3) Ibid., p.8.

(4) Ibid., p.9.

(5) Ibid., p.9. Cf. Studies in Theology, p.221.

upon teleologically,

"An almighty moral Person cannot be supposed to govern His universe, thus in every detail, either unconsciously or capriciously. In His government there is necessarily implied a plan; in the all-pervasiveness and perfection of His government is inevitably implied an all-inclusive and perfect plan; and the conception is not seldom explicitly developed."<sup>1</sup>

Hegel had characterized the religion of the Old Testament as a religion of fear, but in view of this all-pervasive government of God, Warfield maintained that it should be looked upon as a religion of trust. Self-sufficiency is the mark of the wicked, while the righteous live by faith (Hab.2:4).<sup>2</sup> This lesson is emphasized most clearly in the history of the establishment and development of the kingdom of God which

"is consistently represented, not as the product of man's efforts in seeking after God but as the gracious creation of God Himself. Its inception and development are the crowning manifestation of the free grace of the Living God working in history in pursuance of His loving purpose to recover fallen man to Himself."<sup>3</sup>

He was as the potter, Israel as the clay which is molded as the potter wills, or as the helpless babe in its blood cast out to die, abhorred of men, which Jehovah gathered to His bosom in unmerited love (Gen.12:1,3; Deut.7:6-8, 9:4-6, 10:15,16; I Sam.12:22; Isa. 61:8,9, 63:20, 48:9-11; Jer.18:1f, 31:3; Hosea 2:20; Mal.1:2,3). "In a word," summarizes Warfield, "the sovereignty of the Divine will as the principle of all that comes to pass, is a primary postulate of the whole religious life, as well as of the entire world-view of the Old Testament."<sup>4</sup>

Warfield affirms, however, that it is going beyond the Old Testament warrant to speak of the "all-productivity of God" as if God were the only efficient cause, or that God and Satan are insufficiently discriminated, with the

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.10.

(2) Ibid., p.11.

(3) Ibid., p.11. Cf. Opuscula, VII, 1, p.59.

(4) Biblical Doctrines, p.12. Cf. "Election," pp.11,12.

deeds befitting the latter attributed to the former. Nevertheless, even the evil acts of the creatures are so far carried to God that they too, are included in His all-embracing decree. Is. 65:5ff is quoted, "I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I am the Lord that doeth these things" and Prov. 16:4, "The Lord hath made everything for its own end, yea even the wicked for the day of evil," with the contention that here is not a pantheism which looks upon God as the immediate cause of all that comes to pass, nor a pandemonium which admits no distinction between good and evil, nor yet a conception of God entangled in an undeveloped ethical discrimination. On the contrary, over against all dualistic cosmotheistic conceptions, this God is a Person who acts purposefully having first decreed all which He brings to pass. Thus all things find their unity and justification in His eternal plan.

"Even the evil though retaining its quality as evil and hateful to the holy God, and certain to be delt with as hateful, yet does not occur apart from His provision or against His will, but appears in the world which He has made only as the instrument by means of which He works the higher good."<sup>1</sup>

Only when evil is viewed as being thus embraced in God's decree does its existence become a tremendous intellectual problem, and it is as such that it is grappled with by some of the Old Testament authors (e.g. Eccl. 11:5).

#### Summary of the New Testament Teaching

In the Synoptic Gospels the teaching of Christ on the Fatherhood of God by no means lowers the already established concept of His infinite majesty and might. For Jesus, God is the "Lord of heaven and earth" (Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21) "with whom all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26; 22:29; Mk. 10:27; 12:24;

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p. 21.



14:36; Luke 18:27). His control extends to the minutest occurrences in nature (Matt. 10:29,30; Luke 12:7), and yet in governing and guiding the operations of nature (Matt. 5:45, 6:26,28) the mechanism of nature is no more set aside than is the life of the free spirits (Matt. 6:6, 8:13, 24:22, 7:7; Mark 11:23) who also act according to His good pleasure (Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21).<sup>1</sup>

The central place is naturally taken by the development of the Kingdom of God which is the heritage of those blessed ones for whom it has been prepared from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:24, 20:23). It is built up through a "call" (Matt. 9:13), which, however, as a mere invitation is inoperative (Matt. 22:2-14; Luke 14:16-23), and is made effective only by the exertion of a certain constraint on God's part (Luke 14:23), -- so that a distinction emerges between the merely "called" and the really "chosen" (Matt. 22:14).<sup>2</sup> The author of this choice is God (Mark 13:20), who has chosen His elect (Luke 18:7; Matt. 24:22,24,31), so that the effect of the call is already predetermined (Matt. 13). The free sovereignty of God is emphasized in that it is "the lost" (Luke 19:10) and "sinners" (Mark 2:17) with whom Jesus is concerned: His truth is revealed only to "babes" (Matt. 11:25), and He gives His teaching a special form just that it may be veiled from them to whom it is not directed (Mark 4:11), distributing His benefits, independently of merit (Matt. 20:1-16), to those who had been chosen by God therefor (Mark 12:20).<sup>3</sup>

In John it is the will (Θελμα) of the Father (4:34, 6:38,39, 7:17, 9:31) that is the principle of all things; but more especially of the introduction of eternal life into this world of darkness and death which has been judged

(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.33.

(2) Ibid., p.34.

(3) Ibid., p.35. Cf. "Election", p.20; Studies in Theology, p.229.

already (3:18) and upon which the wrath of God abides (3:36; cf. I John 3:14).<sup>1</sup> The coming of the Son into the world introduces "a crisis, a sifting" by which those, who because they are "of God," "of His sheep," are in the world, but not of it (15:19, 17:14), are separated from those who are of the world. This difference thus manifested

"is not thought of as inhering, after a dualistic or semi-Gnostic fashion, in their very natures as such, or as instituted by their own self-framed or accidentally received dispositions, much less by their own conduct in the world, which is rather the result of it, - but ... as the effect of an act of God."<sup>2</sup>

This will of God is not to be thought of apart from the consentient will of the Son, who gives life, accordingly, to whom He will (5:21), and who thus has "His own in the world" (13:1), His "chosen ones" (13:18, 15:16, 19). It is these whom by His choice He has taken out of the world (15:19, 17:6, 14, 16); and for these only is His high-priestly intercession offered (17:9), as to them only is eternal life communicated (10:28, 17:2).<sup>3</sup>

There is no occasion for stumbling in the ascription of "will" and "responsibility" to man, or for puzzling over the designation of "faith" as a "work" of man's (6:29); for though it is God that "draws," it is man that "comes" (3:21, 6:35, 41, 14:6). A notion of the active concurrence of God in all that takes place, both good and evil underlies the thought of the New Testament as well as that of the Old; a concurrence, however, which does not abrogate the moral quality of the deed as rooted in the moral character of the subordinate agent.<sup>4</sup>

"Man is, of course, conceived as acting humanly, after the fashion of an intelligent and voluntary agent; but behind all his action there is ever postulated the all-determining hand of

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.36.

(2) Ibid., p.36.

(3) Ibid., pp.36-37; The Saviour of the World, p.234.

(4) Biblical Doctrines, p.20.

God, to whose sovereign operation even the blindness of the unbelieving is attributed by the evangelist (John 12:39f), while the receptivity to the light of those who believe is repeatedly in the most emphatic way ascribed by Jesus Himself to God alone."<sup>1</sup>

The very heart of the teaching of Jesus is that the Father's good-pleasure is a good pleasure, ethically right, and the issue of infinite love.<sup>2</sup> Yet a doctrine of reprobation is seen in the teachings of Jesus. Warfield expresses it as follows:

"Their (the elect's) segregation, of course, leaves others not elected, to whom none of their privileges are granted; from whom none of their services are expected; with whom their glorious destiny is not shared. This, too, is of God. But this side of the matter, in accordance with Jesus' mission in the world as Saviour rather than as Judge, is less dwelt upon. In the case of neither class, that of the elect as little as that of those that are without, are the purposes of God wrought out without the co-operation of the activities of the subjects; but in neither case is the decisive factor supplied by these, but is discoverable solely in the will of God and the consonant will of the Son. The 'even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight' (Matt. 11:26; Luke 10:21), is to our Lord, at least, an all-sufficient theodicy in the face of all God's diverse dealings with men."<sup>3</sup>

The philosophy of redemptive history which colors the historical books of the New Testament is given explicit declaration in such verses as Acts 2:47 and 13:48 where only those "ordained to eternal life" believed - the believing that comes by the grace of God (18:27), to whom it belongs to open the heart to give heed to the gospel (16:14).<sup>4</sup> It is a teleological conception in which the Kingdom is developing according to the plan of God, fulfilling all that was written (Luke 21:22). Stephen's discourse is made from this standpoint, and in the Petrine remarks (Acts 2:23, 4:28)

"everything that had befallen Jesus is represented as merely the emerging into fact of what had stood beforehand prepared for in 'the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,' so that nothing

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.37.

(2) Ibid., p.38; cf. p.23; Studies in Theology, p.128; "Election," p.8.

(3) Biblical Doctrines, p.39.

(4) Ibid., p.40.



had been accomplished, by whatever agents, except what 'His hand and His counsel has foreordained to come to pass.' It would not be easy to frame language which should more explicitly proclaim the conception of an all-determining decree of God governing the entire sequence of events in time."<sup>1</sup>

The whole purport of the Apocalypse is the portrayal of the divine guidance of history, in which it is the hand of God the almighty (παντοκράτωρ) that, despite all surface appearances, really directs all occurrences and hastens all things to the end of His determining. The elect people of God are His by divine choice alone, their names having been written in the Lamb's Book of Life from the foundation of the world (13:8, 17:8, 20:12-15, 21:27).<sup>2</sup>

It is of course in the Pauline literature of the New Testament that Warfield sees the strongest and clearest presentation of the fact of predestination. Here, as in the rest of the Bible, it is the soteriological interest that dominates the discussion; and yet here, too, the doctrine of election is but the correlate of the general doctrine of the decree of God. Of Paul, Warfield remarks, "No man ever had an intenser or more vital sense of God." For him God was the only wise One (Rom.16:27), who acts according to His good-pleasure (I Cor.15:38, 12:18; Col.1:19), and whose ways are past tracing out (Rom.11:33). He is over all and through all and in all (Eph.4:6; cf. Col.1:16), working all things according to the counsel of His own will (Eph.1:11) so that the whole course of history is, therefore, of His ordering (Acts 14:16, 17:26, Rom.1:18f., 3:25, 9-11; Gal.3:14). The figure of the potter (Rom.9:22), though employed in a somewhat narrower reference, fairly expresses Paul's world-view in its relation to divine activity.<sup>3</sup>

In Rom.8:28 the appeal is primarily to this universal government of God and

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.41.

(2) Ibid., p.45.

(3) Ibid., p.47.



secondarily to the assured position which believers have of being in His favor, which position is theirs because of having been "called according to purpose". The two following verses confirm a strict view of predestination in which

"glorification rests <sup>on</sup> justification, which in turn rests on vocation, while vocation comes <sup>A</sup> only to those who had previously been predestinated to conformity with God's Son, and this predestination to character and destiny only to those afore chosen by God's loving regard."<sup>1</sup>

We cannot avoid assigning to "foreknow" the pregnant sense it bears in similar connections in the New Testament. Otherwise we have the absurdity of Paul's hanging on the merely contemplative foreknowledge of God a declaration adduced to support the assertion that the lovers of God are something deeper and finer than even lovers of God, namely, "the called according to purpose."<sup>2</sup>

The central issue in Paul's discussion of the rejection of contemporary Israel (Rom.9,10,11), as Warfield sees it, is the sovereignty of God in salvation — "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth" — (Rom.9:11)<sup>3</sup> — or in other words, "Israel does not owe the promise to the fact that it is Israel, but conversely owes the fact that it is Israel to the promise."<sup>4</sup> Paul's object is simply to make clear that the inclusion of any individual within the kingdom of God finds its sole cause in the sovereign grace of the choosing God, and cannot in any way or degree depend upon his own merit, privilege, or act. "We are predestinated after the counsel of His own will," writes Warfield, "not after the good inclinations of ours."<sup>5</sup> Thus we are the products of God's election, not the cause of it.

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.49. Cf. "Election," p.10.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p.49.

(3) Ibid., p.50.

(4) Ibid., p.53.

(5) "Election," p.12, quoting John Arrowsmith.

Warfield finds in these chapters an explicit affirmation of reprobation as well as of election, indeed, the twin ideas, he suggests, are ultimately inseparable. If God is represented as sovereignly loving Jacob He is represented equally as hating Esau (Rom.9:13); if Paul declares that He has mercy on whom He will, he equally declares that He hardens whom He will (Rom.9:18).<sup>1</sup> Warfield hastens to point out that this sovereign election and reprobation must be seen in Paul, too, as relating not to men in some neutral state, but to men as condemned sinners before an angry God, so that Paul's theodicy is really rooted in a universalism of ruin rather than a universalism of salvation.<sup>2</sup>

"Were not all men sinners," writes Warfield in an effort to clarify this teaching,

"there might still be an election, as sovereign as now; and there being an election, there would still be as sovereign a rejection; but the rejection would not be a rejection to punishment, to destruction, to eternal death, but to some other destiny consonant to the state in which those passed by should be left. It is not indeed, then, because men are sinners that men are left unelected; election is free, and its obverse of rejection must be equally free; but it is solely because men are sinners that what they are left to is destruction."<sup>3</sup>

Probably the most outstanding passage in Pauline literature in which the matters of predestination and election are dealt with, suggests Warfield, is the first chapter of Ephesians. Here the whole ideal history of salvation in Christ is traced from eternity to eternity -- first its preparation (vv.4,5), then its execution (vv.6,7), its publication (vv.8-10), both to Jews (vv.11,12) and to Gentiles (vv.13,14). All the blessings which are the believers' are theirs only because they have been chosen by God out of the mass of sinful men, in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.54.

(2) Ibid., p.54.

(3) Ibid., p.54; cf. Opuscula, VII "The Revision of the Confession of Faith," pp.45-47. This is the distinction between negative and positive preterition drawn by some of the old Reformed divines, e.g., Keckerman, Wolleb, Heidegger, Bucan and Riessen. Cf. H. Hepp, Reformed Dogmatics, pt.VIII, par.23,24.

Him.<sup>1</sup> Since this predestination, far from setting aside the necessity of good works, is "unto good works", it becomes in Paul's hands a rich exhortation to high moral effort (e.g., I Thess.2:12; II Thess.2:13-15; Rom.6; II Cor.5:14; Col.1:10; Phil.1:21, 2:12,13; II Tim.2:19).<sup>2</sup> Warfield recalls Fritzsche's jibe that Paul would have reasoned better on the high themes of fate, free-will, and providence had he sat at the feet of Aristotle rather than at those of Gamaliel, and responds,

"Antiquity produced, however, no ethical genius equal to St. Paul, and even as a teacher of the foundations of ethics Aristotle himself might well be content to sit rather at his feet ..."<sup>3</sup>

There is a providential concursus taught by Paul (Eph.1:11) but not in any sense which would necessitate an antinomy between the feelings of dependence and responsibility. These are fundamentally the same profound convictions operating in a double sphere.

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From the Biblical material summarized above we see that Warfield has expounded precisely the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith.<sup>4</sup> In this Biblico-dogmatic form, however, the doctrine possesses the following fruitful characteristics.

(1) It purports to be of practical rather than speculative interest to the Christian, bringing assurance of salvation, since salvation is grounded in the sole-sufficiency of God, and giving encouragement to the believer in all the vicissitudes of life since all things are ordered for the good of the

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.55; Studies in Theology, p.228; "Election," p.9.

(2) Ibid., p.58; "Election," p.13.

(3) Ibid., p.59.

(4) WB., chapter III, para.1,2,5,6,7.

elect.<sup>1</sup>

(2) It affirms God's purpose to be entirely righteous and gracious.<sup>2</sup>

(3) It does not conceive of God's electing action as taking place apart from the will of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

(4) It bears the strongest possible ethical emphasis since the elect have been predestinated unto good works to be conformed to the image of God's Son.<sup>4</sup>

There are many difficulties to be faced in maintaining such a doctrine as Warfield holds, not the least of which are those which revolve around the notion of reprobation or double predestination - the notion that the number of the elect is in some sense a limited or "closed"<sup>5</sup> number. Most of the objections of this sort, if not all of them, can be reduced ultimately into the problem of the existence of sin and misery in the creation of a loving and omnipotent God. Warfield attempted a rational solution of the problem by suggesting that sin arose in God's world in accordance with His will - though His goodness and righteousness remain unsullied - in order to accomplish some higher good not otherwise possible. And in His election God is saving all that He can receive the consent of His entire nature to save.<sup>6</sup>

Whether or not these suggestions of Warfield are right or not we cannot say;

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, pp.23,57; "Election," p.17; The Saviour of the World, p.231; Faith and Life, pp.202ff.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, pp.22,23,46; "Election," pp.7,12,21; Studies in Theology, pp.119n,125,128; The Plan of Salvation, p.88.

(3) Biblical Doctrines, pp.36,55,56; The Saviour of the World, p.239.

(4) Biblical Doctrines, pp.58,59; "Election," pp.13-18; Faith and Life, pp.298ff,361ff.

(5) Karl Barth's term, Die Kirchliche Dogmatik, II/2, p.466, as translated by O. Weber, Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics, p.101.

(6) "Princeton Theological Review", vol.V, p.475; Critical Reviews, p.153; Biblical Doctrines, p.21; The Plan of Salvation, p.74.



but the whole attempt strikes us as being unwarranted from a Biblical standpoint. Paul's reply to objections raised against the discriminatory grace of God was more cautious. It consisted of a warning, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"<sup>1</sup> Of course it belongs to the Christian faith to believe that no power of evil can frustrate the purpose of God, — else we could possess no assurance of our salvation — and yet we cannot rationalize evil away. Its existence must remain a mystery to us. We do not maintain that Warfield has completely purged this element of mystery away, nor even that he has allowed a rationalistic scholasticism to dominate his thinking; but simply that there is present, especially in those writings which are not distinctly Biblical studies, a certain un-Biblical rationalism. In all fairness to Warfield, however, this criticism should not be pressed too severely; for in his exegetical studies, especially the pamphlet "Election," published near the end of his life, he is seen pointedly affirming a true Christian agnosticism in the face of the mysteries of God's election.

"We may ask, no doubt, why God does not extend His saving grace to all; and why if He sends it to some only, He sends it just to those some to whom He sends it rather than to others. These are not wise questions to ask ... No doubt God has His reasons ... for doing just what He does with His electing grace. Perhaps we may divine some of them. No doubt there are others which we do not divine. Better leave it to Him, and content ourselves, facing, in the depths of our ignorance and our sin-bred lack of comprehension, these tremendous realities, with the O altitudo of Paul: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out!" Or may we not rise to the great consenting "Yea!" which Christ taught us: "Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight."<sup>2</sup>

The most objectionable feature of Warfield's doctrine of election and predestination comes to light when, unhappily, he allowed himself to become

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(1) Cf. J.K.S. Reid in the article "Determinate", in A Theological Word Book of the Bible, edited by A. Richardson, p.68.

(2) "Election", pp.20,21.

immersed in the old Protestant scholastic dispute concerning the order of the Divine Decrees.<sup>1</sup> There was no question in this dispute but that all was decreed before the foundation of the world. The question concerned the sequence of the decrees in order of thought.<sup>2</sup>

In the Supralapsarian scheme the decrees were placed in the following order:

- (1) The Decree of Creation.
- (2) The Decree of Election.
- (3) The Decree (permissive) of the Fall.
- (4) The Decree of Redemption, i.e. the Trinitarian

agreement in eternity whereby, among other things, Christ assumed the role of Redeemer and Mediator.

The Infralapsarian scheme placed them in this order:

- (1) The Decree of Creation.
- (2) The Decree of the Fall.
- (3) The Decree of Election.
- (4) The Decree of Redemption.

The Post-redemptionists<sup>3</sup> gave the decrees this sequence:

- (1) The Decree of Creation.
- (2) The Decree of the Fall.
- (3) The Decree of Redemption.
- (4) The Decree of Election.

In entering the dispute as to the position which election should occupy in the order of decrees Warfield has quite evidently gone beyond the proper sphere of a theology of the Word and passed into the realms of scholastic speculations.<sup>4</sup>

(1) Cf. H. Hepp, Reformed Dogmatics, chap. VII, paras. 15-16; C. Hodge, Systematic Theology, vol. II, pp. 316-324; L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, pp. 110-125.

(2) The Plan of Salvation, p. 89.

(3) Warfield's term, The Plan of Salvation, p. 90. C. Hodge uses the term "Hypothetical Redemption", op. cit., p. 321. The position is also variously termed "Salvatorianism" (cf. Studies in Theology, p. 228) and "Amyrauldianism" (cf., The Plan of Salvation, p. 92) since it was first formulated by Moses Amyraut, Professor in the Theological School at Saumur, France, early in the seventeenth century.

(4) Though Warfield and Hodge claimed that Infralapsarianism was the Biblical view, Berkhof, H. Bavinck (cf., Coreformacorde Dogmatiek, pp. 347-425) and others say that both the supra and infra views can be supported from Scripture.

Even so, the motive which drove him into this discussion was a practical rather than a speculative one. He was anxious to maintain two things; first, that election be thought of strictly in terms of soteriology, and second, that the proper substitutional aspect of the atonement should not be eviscerated. The Supralapsarian view, in which election is placed before the fall, conceived of the principle of particularism, in the sense of discrimination, as belonging to the sphere of God's cosmic creation rather than to that of His soteriological activity. The object of God's election was, accordingly, man as such rather than man as a sinner.<sup>1</sup> Hence Warfield rejected the Supralapsarian scheme.

The order of decrees according to the view of Post-redemptionism allows the decree of redemption to precede that of election and thus eliminates any notion of a limited atonement. This amounted, for Warfield, not simply to an elimination of a limited atonement but to a turning away from a substitutive atonement altogether, for if Christ died in order to remove all the obstacles in the way of salvation, - which is but to say that He died in order to take away sin - why then are not all those for whom He died saved? And if they are not, then there must be some other obstacles in the way of salvation, and Christ cannot be allowed to have saved anyone.<sup>2</sup> Does the atonement actually lay the foundation for men's salvation, or does it merely open the way for God safely to save them on other grounds? This is the issue as Warfield sees it, but it strikes us that his objection has validity only upon the assumption of a rather scholastic conception of the divine economy. Furthermore, in both the Supralapsarian and Infralapsarian arrangement of the decrees it will be noted that the decree

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(1) The Plan of Salvation, p.88; Studies in Theology, p.228.

(2) The Plan of Salvation, p.95.



of election is separated from the decree of redemption which means that a separation has been made, in thought at least,<sup>1</sup> between election and Christ. In commenting on the decision of the Westminster Assembly, with which Warfield was in complete agreement, he wrote,

"It would seem quite obvious that the Assembly intended to state in this clause<sup>2</sup> with adequate clearness their reasoned and deliberate conviction that the decree of election lies behind the decree of the gift of Christ for redemption, and that the latter is to be classed as one of the means for the execution of the decree of election."

To speak of the gift of Christ as the "means for the execution of the decree of election" is indeed a regrettable lapse on Warfield's part from the splendid Biblical emphasis on predestination "in Christ".

We shall refrain from drawing out into any detail the criticism indicated above since, while we do not say that the theological issues which motivated Warfield's discussion of the ordo decretorum are not worth contending for, we question the legitimacy of the whole discussion as occupying a part of Christian dogmatics.

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(1) It is true that Warfield teaches that there is no subsequence of time with God (The Plan of Salvation, p.94) and that the decree is a unit (Studies in Theology, p.228) still we would insist that separating election from Christ even "in thought" is un-Biblical.

(2) Viz., "Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ." Westminster Confession of Faith, chap. III, par. vi.

(3) B.B. Warfield, Westminster Confession, chap. 4, p.277.



# REGENERATION AND THE ACT OF FAITH

## The Role of Faith

The doctrine of election and predestination is of the utmost importance in Professor Warfield's soteriology. All of the elect are to be finally saved, and indeed it would be no exaggeration to say that election itself, rightly understood, is the gospel. Still this does not in any way nullify the significance of the work of Christ or of the Holy Spirit, nor does it set aside the reality of man's act of faith in which he chooses for God. It rather establishes their validity, for in predestination God does not determine ends apart from means.<sup>1</sup> Warfield cites two illustrations which are quite to the point:

"It would for example be as intelligible to argue that when a king has determined to take a city he may at once intermit all concern about armies and engines of war - the determination will take the city; or that when a physician has determined to cure a patient, he may safely neglect to administer the remedies - the determination will cure the patient; as that when God has determined to save His people, all significance in the work of Christ, the only means by which the determined salvation is to be accomplished, is taken away."<sup>2</sup>

After a similar manner the significance of man's life of faith is established since "God has chosen us from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto He called us through the gospel into the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:13).<sup>3</sup> By being thus involved in the salvation to which God has elected His own, faith as the means of salvation is established.

The grace of God is the only cause of salvation; the work of Christ is the sole grounds; and faith appears as the "means" - in this narrow sense -

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(1) Critical Reviews, p.153; Studies in Theology, p.228; The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.211.

(2) Critical Reviews, p.249.

(3) Cited in this connection, The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.210.

or the "instrumental cause."<sup>1</sup> Thus the act of faith, in which one rests on Christ alone for salvation, is by no means given equal status with the work of Christ itself: on this Warfield insists most strongly.

"We are persuaded that more Christians forget that Christ is their Saviour today in the interests of their Faith, than in the interests of any other support for their erring soul whatever: and nothing is more important than to bear home to the hearts of men the prime fact that Faith is no man's Saviour - that we have but one Saviour, Jesus Christ: while as for Faith, it is but the instrument by which God the Lord saves us. We are saved ... propter merita Domini Nostri, PER FIDEM - by means of faith."<sup>2</sup>

From Paul's words, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus ..." (Eph.2:10), Warfield takes occasion to draw a parallel between our creation as men and our re-creation as Christians. In neither case does the use of means argue that it is not God that gives the increase.<sup>3</sup> Pelagianism is not transmuted into Evangelical Christianity by making a substitution of faith for Pelagius' works; on the contrary, "the antithesis to the Pelagian works is not faith, but grace."<sup>4</sup> The view which supposes that God can be commanded by acts of men, even if these acts be acts of faith, bears a closer affinity to magic than to religion in that it places supernatural powers at the disposal of men for working effects of their own choosing.<sup>5</sup>

Faith as a psychic act is not considered to be saving, that is,

"as if this frame of mind or attitude of heart were itself a virtue with claims on God for reward, or at least especially pleasing to Him (either in its nature or as an act of obedience) and thus predisposing Him to favour, or as if it brought the soul into an attitude of receptivity or of sympathy with God, or opened a channel of communication from Him."<sup>6</sup>

It is not bare faith but faith in Jesus Christ that saves.<sup>7</sup> Its value

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.505; Perfectionism, vol.II, p.440.

(2) "Princeton Theological Review," I, p.675, emphasis Warfield's.

(3) Faith and Life, p.218-219. Cf. Studies in Theology, p.475.

(4) Perfectionism, vol.II, p.608.

(5) Ibid., p.609.

(6) Biblical Doctrines, p.504.

(7) Ibid., p. 504; The Saviour of the World, pp. 243-244.

and saving power reside not in its own formal nature but in its object "Jesus Christ, God the Redeemer."<sup>1</sup> In the Scriptures this purely mediatory function of faith is very clearly indicated in the regimens in which it stands, which ordinarily express simple instrumentality. It is most frequently joined to its verb as the dative of means (Acts 15:9; 26:18; Rom. 3:28; 4:20; 5:2; 9:20; II Cor. 1:24; Heb. 11); and the relationship intended is further explained by the use to express it of the prepositions  $\epsilon\kappa$  (Rom. 1:17; 3:26,30; 4:16; 5:1; 9:30,32; 10:6; 14:23; Gal. 2:16; 3:7-9,11,12,27,28; 5:5; I Tim. 1:5; Heb. 10:38; James 2:24) and  $\delta\iota\alpha$  (with the genitive, never with the accusative, Rom. 3:22,25,30; II Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:16; 3:14,26; II Tim. 3:15; Heb. 6:12; 11:33,39; I Peter 1:5), the fundamental idea of the former construction being that of source or origin, and of the latter that of mediation or instrumentality.<sup>2</sup>

In assigning this mediatorial role to faith Warfield is anxious to defend, in the first place, the all-sufficiency of the work of Christ. The atonement is not a work which needs supplementing or completing by our faith; in other words, "the impetration of salvation precedes its application: the whole of the impetration, the whole of the application."<sup>3</sup> In the second place, Warfield insists that this application is to be ascribed solely to God as well as is the impetration. It is God alone that saves,<sup>4</sup> and though faith is spoken of as "the condition precedent to justification and adoption,"<sup>5</sup> this is said only after it has been made clear that faith is the result of the recreative action of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the sinner.<sup>6</sup> Should

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, pp. 25-26.

(2) Ibid., p. 504.

(3) Faith and Life, p. 399.

(4) The Power of God Unto Salvation, p. 49.

(5) Faith and Life, p. 399.

(6) Ibid., p. 399.

faith be thought of as the unaided action of man's free will, and should the efficacy of Christ's work be made to wait upon this action, then we have something which in comparison with the gospel of God's grace is nothing less than a different religion.<sup>1</sup> Against all such concepts it must be maintained that "there are no subjective conditions to salvation, in the sense of conditions which we must perform in order to obtain or retain salvation."<sup>2</sup>

### Man's Inability

"Man has no part to do toward salvation: and," adds Warfield pointedly, "if he had, he could not do it - his very characteristic as a sinner is that he is helpless, that he is 'lost'."<sup>3</sup> The "childlikeness" which must characterize those who enter the kingdom of heaven (Mark 10:15) is not so much a subjective attitude of mind as just helpless dependence itself. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mark 10:14).<sup>4</sup> It will be seen here that a very strong sense of the enervating power of sin lies behind his thought in regard to faith. Here, as in the matter of atonement, the analogy of grace is allowed a consistent expression. "Sinful man, just because he is sinful and sin is no light evil but destroys all goodness, has no power to do anything that is good in God's sight, and therefore is dependent utterly on God's grace alone for salvation."<sup>5</sup> As far as spiritual things are concerned he is dead. "The unregenerate man cannot believe."<sup>6</sup> He has no more will to come to life than did the dry bones (Ezekiel 37) or than did

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(1) Critical Reviews, p.211; Studies in Theology, p.464.

(2) Faith and Life, p.396; Critical Reviews, p.474.

(3) Perfectionism, vol. II, p.604.

(4) Faith and Life, p.78.

(5) Studies in Theology, p.473.

(6) Perfectionism, vol. II, p.75.



Lazarus in the tomb (John 13).<sup>1</sup> The Christian man is therefore not an "evolution" out of the natural man: he is a new creation.<sup>2</sup>

Warfield asks of all those, both Liberal and Evangelical, who reject the Reformation doctrine of effectual calling if they have considered the serious subjective effects of sin. Here he makes a valuable contribution, for certainly if the atonement is an act of grace it is at once a judgment against our fallen human nature. Quite to the point, he asks of J.C. Smith,<sup>3</sup>

"If the Spirit's work is only suasive, and no recreating power is exerted, how are men who, by reason of sin cannot repent and believe perfectly, to be made able to do so? Can suasion overcome an inability?"<sup>4</sup>

Against C.C. Trumbull<sup>5</sup> who anxiously maintained the autocracy of the human will in the matter of "accepting" salvation, Warfield wrote,

"Our wills are free enough, but they are hopelessly biased to its rejection and will certainly reject it so long as it is only an 'offer'. But it is not true that God's free gift is only an 'offer': it is a 'gift' - and what God gives He does not merely place at our disposal to be accepted or rejected as we may chance to choose, but 'gives', makes ours, as He gave life to Lazarus and wholeness to the man with the withered hand."<sup>6</sup>

His criticism against the Ritschlians was in essentially the same vein. They thought to bring a valid argument against the Reformed doctrine by asking, "Is the moral freedom of man really completely lost?" When this was answered in the affirmative the reply was, "Then there would be nothing in sinful man on which deliverance is to take hold."<sup>7</sup> Warfield rejoined,

"The Reformation doctrine not only entails but strenuously asserts that there is nothing in sinful man on which deliverance is to 'take hold', and that he is incapable of deliverance save by the recreation

(1) "Election," p.20; Perfectionism, vol.II, p.603.

(2) Studies in Theology p.44.

(3) In re. the position taken up in his book The Christ of the Cross, 1908.

(4) Critical Reviews, p.208.

(5) Editor of "The Sunday School Times" (US). The comment here is in re. a number of articles relating to the "Victorious Life" movement.

(6) Perfectionism, vol.II, p.604.

(7) J. Wendland, Albrecht Ritschl und seine Schuler, p.104, quoted by Warfield, Perfectionism, vol.I, p.20.

of his dead soul by the almighty power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

The issue in all of this is not, for Warfield, the matter of human nature and its powers; and he certainly does not intend to do despite to that which God created in His own image. He defends Luther from the same charge<sup>2</sup> who, he says, was not talking about human nature and its powers, but about sin and grace. Luther did not Erasmus to tell him that man had a mind and a will and a reason: without these one would not be a man. The possession of these powers is presupposed; the point of importance is that man is now a sinner and cannot do by nature what it requires grace to do.<sup>3</sup>

In seeing the view which Warfield holds of the disabling effects of sin, together with the role he assigns to faith in the process of salvation, we already perceive the lines along which his teaching on effectual calling and regeneration will take. He distinguished two senses in which "calling" is spoken of in the New Testament.<sup>4</sup> When Jesus used the term (καλέω, Matt. 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32, and, parabolically, Matt. 22:3,4,8,9; Luke 14:8,9,10,12, 13,16,17,24; καλέω, Matt. 22:14 [20:16]) it was in the ordinary sense of invitation, and referred therefore to a much larger circle than the elect (Matt. 22:14). This fundamental sense of "bidding" may continue to cling to the term in the hands of the evangelists (Matt. 4:21; Mark 1:20; cf. Luke 14:7; John 2:1) though with considerable depth of meaning as revealed in such a passage as Rev. 19:9 "Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb." In the Pauline and Petrine writings and the Epistle to the Hebrews the term takes on deeper meanings, doubtless, suggests Warfield,

(1) Perfectionism, vol. I, p. 20.

(2) Studies in Theology, pp. 474-479.

(3) Ibid., p. 474.

(4) Biblical Doctrines, p. 44; cf. pp. 34, 38, 43.

"out of consideration of the author of the call, who has but to speak and it is done (cf. Rom.4:17)."<sup>1</sup> In these instances it is no longer a synonym of "invitation", but of "election" itself; or more precisely, "as expressive of the temporal act of the Divine efficiency by which effect is given to the electing decree."<sup>2</sup> This is "effectual" calling.

In the matter of salvation we must be willing; but we are not to think of this willing as the product of our own native ability, but rather as the product of the Holy Spirit working conjointly with the Word of God.<sup>3</sup> The Holy Spirit persuades, yes; but He does more than this. He makes the sinner, lying dead in his sins, alive in Christ (Eph.2:5).<sup>4</sup> Because of sin men are dead; faith toward God is an impossibility for them.<sup>5</sup> But God does the impossible (Mark 10:27)<sup>6</sup> and by His almighty power, the power "which He wrought in Christ Jesus when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph.1:20), energizes the sinner that he may respond in faith. If such an action by God were not necessary then the law would have sufficed for salvation.<sup>8</sup>

This action of the Holy Spirit, asserts Warfield, does not ignore or do violence to man's psychological constitution nor to the psychological nature of the act of faith itself. To refuse, in the interest of man's free will, to admit this action of the Holy Spirit is to forget that "man was not made for will, but will for man."<sup>9</sup> In regeneration man is not "dehumanized", but energized.<sup>10</sup> The effectual calling of the Holy Spirit,

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(1) Biblical Doctrines, p.44.

(2) Ibid., p.44.

(3) Perfectionism, vol.II, p.433; Calvin and Calvinism, p.31.

(4) "Election," p.3.

(5) Studies in Theology, p.337.

(6) The Power of God Unto Salvation, pp.94ff.

(7) "Election," p.5.

(8) Ibid., p.4.

(9) Two Studies in the History of Doctrine, p.11.

(10) "Election," p.5.

far from abrogating man's freedom, restores the freedom which he has lost due to sin. Faith in the instance of man before the fall was a normal and an inevitable reaction to the presence of God, and now by the Holy Spirit's action man is restored to a state in which faith is once again the normal and inevitable reaction as Jesus Christ the Saviour is presented to him in the gospel.<sup>1</sup> "By the divine illumination of the understanding, softening of the heart, and quickening of the will"<sup>2</sup> man's faculties are "measurably restored to their proper functioning"<sup>3</sup> so that the capacity for faith is once again his. "There is not required a creation of something entirely new, but only a restoration of an old relation [by means of the atonement] and a renewal therewith of an old disposition."<sup>4</sup> Thus in its highest exercise faith, though in a true sense the gift of God, is in an equally true sense man's own act.<sup>5</sup>

In chapter II of this paper certain difficulties which attend Professor Warfield's teaching on the nature of faith were pointed out from the standpoint of epistemology. Here, though we are thinking now more in terms of the fiducial rather than the noetic aspects, the same difficulties are present. It would seem that if in regeneration man's faculties are "only measurably restored to their proper functioning",<sup>6</sup> something more than this partial negation of the subjective effects of sin is required. It is true that Warfield teaches that our faith is the imperfect response of the Holy Spirit's effectual calling;<sup>7</sup> but also according to his teaching faith is invariably

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(1) "Princeton Theological Review," I, pp.144-145; Studies in Theology, pp.336-341.

(2) Ibid., p.337.

(3) "Princeton Theological Review," I, p.145.

(4) Studies in Theology, p.339.

(5) Ibid., p.337; The Power of God Unto Salvation, p.211; Faith and Life, p.197.

(6) "Princeton Theological Review," I, p.145.

(7) Ibid., p.674.



forthcoming in the lives of those effectually called.<sup>1</sup> Even if the work of  
 in a given individual  
 regeneration were complete in the sense that all the guilt and corruption of sin  
 were purged away, we do not see how it would follow that such a one would then  
 inevitably express an attitude of loving trust toward God. This would neces-  
 sitate the belief that all moral beings untrammelled by sin can do naught but love  
 and trust God. But if this be true, how is it that man fell in the first place?

We do not think it wise, however, to rest a great deal of weight on an  
 objection of this sort. It is much more to the point to mention that Calvin in  
 the Institutes book III, chapters i and ii, seems to speak of the Holy Spirit's  
 role in working faith as more of a positive function, especially in the use of the  
 term "seal" in III. ii. 11, 12. A specific instance of what we are referring to  
 is to be found in III. i. 4. Calvin says:

"For in vain would the light present itself to the blind, unless  
 this Spirit of understanding would open their mental eyes; so that  
 he may be justly called the key with which the treasures of the  
 kingdom are unlocked to us ..."

So far this is precisely the doctrine of Warfield, but Calvin goes on and  
 completes his sentence, "and his illumination constitutes our mental eyes to  
 behold them." This, as we have said, seems to indicate another factor in  
 addition to the mere cancelling of sin's corruption, a factor which is totally  
 undeveloped in Warfield's theology.

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Since faith is thought of as the "instrumental means" rather than the  
 ground of salvation, it is therefore not the condition of election but the

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(1) "Election," p. 11.

evidence of it.<sup>1</sup> Warfield saw furnished in this teaching a clear ground of assurance of salvation. Because of the nature of faith itself, assurance of salvation was not necessarily a normal or invariable implication of the direct act of faith. If faith terminated on a proposition concerning, say, the truth of the Christian religion, or even one's own election, then assurance would be of the very essence of faith.<sup>2</sup> But the object of our faith is not a proposition but a person.<sup>3</sup>

"It is not true that God requires election of you for salvation, or offers predestination to you as the way of life. He offers you not predestination, but Christ."<sup>4</sup>

The way lies open then to treat assurance as the reflex of faith.<sup>5</sup>

In drawing this distinction it would appear that Warfield has already done considerable service to that trembling soul who may be in doubt and despair as to his own salvation. Just to know that one may be saved without possessing full assurance of the fact, should itself help that soul to rest easier. "Election does indeed lie at the root of our salvation," he tells us, "but faith is the proof of election."<sup>6</sup> Regeneration is not then a fact of experience, but rather an inference from experience; just as inability is not a ground of quiescence, but an inference from quiescence. It passes away in regeneration; and no one can know that it is gone save by the change in activity.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless we are

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(1) The Saviour of the World, p. 243.

(2) "The Princeton Theological Review," I, p. 148.

(3) Biblical Doctrines, p. 503.

(4) The Saviour of the World, p. 240. The attitude expressed here characterizes quite precisely a large number of Warfield's sermons. It is interesting that Calvin in commenting on the same passage (John 6:40) takes occasion also to rebuke all who would seek to go behind the offer of Christ to the secret election of God. "Whoever he be that is not satisfied with Christ, but indulges in curious inquiries about eternal predestination, such a person ... desires to be saved contrary to the purpose of God. The election of God is in itself hidden and secret; the Lord manifests it by calling, that is, when he bestows on us this blessing of calling us." Comm. John 6:40.

(5) "The Princeton Theological Review," I, p. 148.

(6) The Saviour of the World, p. 240.

(7) Princeton Sermons, p. 50.

not to make our faith the subject of anxious examination but are rather to keep our eyes fixed steadfastly on Christ Jesus.

"Beloved, do not, I beseech you, ground your salvation even in your faith. Ground it only in Jesus Christ who alone is your Saviour. And remember this, -- that it is not your faith that saves you but God, and God alone, by whom it is that faith is wrought in your soul, and by whose power it is that you are guarded through your faith unto that salvation which is reserved for you in heaven, and which shall without fail be revealed at the last day. Can your faith fail? Nay, forget your faith. Certainly the power of God, your Almighty Saviour, through which alone you have faith and which is pledged to your guarding, cannot fail!"<sup>1</sup>

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(1) The Saviour of the World, p. 244.

## SANCTIFICATION

In a number of places Warfield describes the salvation which God has wrought for us in Christ Jesus.<sup>1</sup> In each instance deliverance from guilt stands first, but in no instance does it stand alone. Emancipation from the power of sin is said to follow upon it, and removal of all the ills of life constitutes its final issue. Even here where the attention is centered upon what might be called the negative aspects of God's blessings, deliverance from sin in all its aspects in contradistinction from the positive blessings many of which do not yet appear (I Jn. 3:2), we see the roots of Warfield's doctrine of sanctification both in the individual, social, and cosmic sense. Precisely because the gospel is one of deliverance from sin, it is emphatically an ethical gospel — a gospel of righteousness and holiness of life.<sup>2</sup> Its very essence is made to consist in "sanctification of the Spirit" (II Thess. 2:13).<sup>3</sup> "John Wesley is undeniably right," comments Warfield, "when he says that holiness is the substance of salvation. Ritschl was right when he emphasized the moral nature of Christianity as a religion, and saw it advancing to a Kingdom of Righteousness."<sup>4</sup>

What God's own are elected unto is salvation, and salvation is a unit into which are bound many things, not only those which come under the heading of justification but also of sanctification. "You may find Christians at every stage of this process, for it is a process through which all must pass; but you will find none who will not in God's own time pass through every stage of it."<sup>5</sup> When a man

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(1) The Saviour of the World, pp. 46, 50, 184; Perfectionism, Vol. II, pp. 477, 579, 580; "The Princeton Theological Review," I, p. 327; The Power of God unto Salvation, pp. 183ff.; Studies in Theology, p. 262; Biblical Doctrines, pp. 440, 450.

(2) The Power of God unto Salvation, p. 192.

(3) Faith and Life, pp. 351, 298.

(4) Perfectionism, Vol. I, p. 108.

(5) "The Princeton Theological Review," XVII, p. 327.



repents and believes he does not accomplish an act of faith by which he receives merely some isolated aspect of salvation such as justification, and thereby stands in need of a second act of faith upon the accomplishment of which sanctification becomes his also. What he does in coming to faith is to receive Christ Jesus.<sup>1</sup> By the Holy Spirit he is united with Him,<sup>2</sup> and his future life as a Christian consists in an ever increasing turning to Christ and resting on Him alone.<sup>3</sup> Christ Jesus is made unto the believer wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (I Cor. 1:30),<sup>4</sup> and to introduce any sort of separation here, say, between justification and sanctification, is to attempt to divide Christ Himself.<sup>5</sup> In being united to Christ the believer possesses all,<sup>6</sup> and yet there remains the progressive work of the Holy Spirit whereby that holiness which he possesses immediately in principle is made his in fact.<sup>7</sup> This is sanctification, and it follows inevitably in the train of justification.<sup>8</sup> It is in this sense that we are to be partakers of the divine nature (II Pt. 1:4; cf. Heb. 12:10).<sup>9</sup>

Warfield could not agree with the advocates of various doctrines of sanctification that their emphasis on actual holiness of life was meeting a deficiency in the Christianity of "ordinary Christians."<sup>10</sup> In the whole history of Christianity there have been very few — the Moravians, for instance — who have been inclined to sum up salvation solely in terms of its objective benefits.

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(1) Perfectionism, Vol. II, p. 580.

(2) The Saviour of the World, pp. 56, 184; Perfectionism, Vol. II, p. 105.

(3) Perfectionism, Vol. I, pp. 88, 276.

(4) Ibid., II, pp. 52, 97, 512, 575.

(5) Ibid., p. 475; cf. Biblical Doctrine, pp. 111, 118, 461.

(6) Ibid., p. 580.

(7) Ibid., p. 484; Counterfeit Miracles, p. 177.

(8) Perfectionism, Vol. II, p. 576.

(9) Faith and Life, p. 447.

(10) Perfectionism, Vol. II, p. 576. The reference is to G.G. Trumbull though the criticism is made in a somewhat general manner so as to apply with varying degrees of preciseness to a large group.

"When men have lauded justification as the articulus stantis ecclesiae — as 'the beginning, and the middle, and the end of salvation,' — it has not been because they denied or depreciated the other elements which go to make up a complete salvation; but because they, rightly, see them all indetachably bound up with justification and drawn inevitably in its train."<sup>1</sup>

Pelagius, Osiander, Kohlbrügge, and "certain of the Neo-Kohlbrüggian party" all have in common a denial of the subjective operations of God on the soul. This does not mean that they deny the reality or necessity of sanctification; but deny rather its essential relationship with justification, deny that it is a work of God and as such does not have an act of the human will underlying it.<sup>2</sup> If salvation is of God alone then "man does not 'secure' the grace of God: the grace of God 'secures' the activities of man — in every sphere and in every detail, of these activities,"<sup>3</sup> and the relation of justification to sanctification as Warfield has expounded it is established. But if some form of Pelagianism underlies our thinking then our sanctification, our progression in holiness, is undergirded all along the way by acts of the human will, and is of course connected in no certain and sure way with justification.<sup>4</sup>

Over against both Pelagian and quietistic conceptions of the nature of sanctification Warfield set the same notion of the concursive operation of God

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(1) Perfectionism, Vol. II, p. 576.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, pp. 460, 461.

(3) Perfectionism, Vol. II, p. 610.

(4) This is the gist of Warfield's criticism in the two-volume work Perfectionism in which varying forms of perfectionism are criticized both in Continental thinkers of the Ritschlian variety (vol. I), and in several sanctification movements on the Continent, in Great Britain, and in the United States. John H.J. Barker in This Is the Will of God, 195, does not seem to have felt the force of Warfield's argument nor even to have grasped the main theme of it. He writes, "Thus the perfection which is possible for the entirely sanctified believer is one of quality or kind but not perfected in degree or quality" (p. 88), and affixes this footnote: "This fact is the basis of B.B. Warfield's reiterated charge of 'Pelagianism' against holiness movements in his massive work, Studies in Perfectionism." It is true that this is one line of criticism which Warfield takes, but it is not the most fundamental and certainly not the sole basis for the charge of Pelagianism.

working in us as he did in the case of faith itself. The popular maxim "work and pray" holds no difficulty for him.<sup>1</sup> It is God who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure and yet we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:13). Here accuracy must be maintained, for "Paul does *not* say simply 'work your salvation,' but 'work out your salvation' -- employing a compound verb which throws its emphasis on the end, 'bring your salvation to its completion.'<sup>2</sup> The work rests on the activity of God,<sup>3</sup> but we are by no means passive. "Throes of repentance and ecstasies of aspiration" are by no means rendered unnecessary or unbecoming.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, efforts to be holy are themselves part of the sanctifying effects of the faith by which one is united with Christ.<sup>5</sup>

Here the role of the law comes in, by way of defining what is one's duty, though this by no means amounts to a subordination of love to conscience. Neither must be subordinated to the other; Warfield expresses himself in this manner:

"When Augustine says, 'Love and do what you please,' it is with the maxim in his mind that love is the fulfillment of the law, in the sense that love is in order to duty, and instrument to the meeting of obligation. It is a fundamental mistake to set love and duty in opposition to one another ... We cannot try a cause between the religion of love and the religion of duty as litigants -- as if we were trying the cause between spontaneous and legalistic religion. Love should be dutiful and duty should be loving ... What we are really doing is discussing the affectional and the ethical elements in religion and seeking to raise the question whether we prefer emotion or conscientiousness in religion. The only possible answer is -- both."<sup>6</sup>

It will be noted that in describing our deliverance from sin Warfield lists

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- (1) Perfectionism, Vol. II, p. 52.
  - (2) Faith and Life, p. 299.
  - (3) Perfectionism, Vol. II, p. 519.
  - (4) Ibid., p. 555.
  - (5) Ibid., p. 105.
  - (6) Ibid., pp. 443-444.

the removal of guilt first, corruption second, and finally all the ill effects.<sup>1</sup> This in itself is sufficient to indicate that the mode of the sanctification of the Spirit involves a work of renewal accomplished on the heart of the sinner, since out of a sinful heart he can never perform a perfectly sinless act. It is only by means of a defective psychology in which the "will" is thought of as acting independently of the "nature" behind it that we can look upon sinning atomistically, as if we could sin in this act and not sin in that. "Sin is a quality which, when entrenched in the heart, afflicts all of our actions without exception."<sup>2</sup> Consequently the relation between this renewing action of God on the heart and the holiness which we actually perform is thought of under the Scriptural symbol, "make the tree good that its fruit may be good also."<sup>3</sup> With an eye toward making a distinction between the Scriptural teaching and certain forms of quietism Warfield wrote,

"Christ dwells within us not for the purpose of sinking our being into His being, nor of substituting Himself for us as the agent in our activities; much less of seizing our wills and operating them for us in contradiction to our own immanent mind; but to operate directly upon us, to make us good, that our works, freely done by us, may under His continual leading, be good also."<sup>4</sup>

Our wills, being the expression of our hearts, continually more and more dying unto sin and living unto righteousness, will progressively resist Him less and less until, our hearts having been made through and through good, our wills will do only righteousness. Then the Christian, entirely sanctified, will perform holy acts in his own strength in the sense that a holy angel does.<sup>5</sup>

To possess "entire sanctification" meant, for Warfield, to be "blamelessly entire," perfect in every part of us —spirit, soul, and body (I Thess. 5:23-24).<sup>6</sup>

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- (1) Ibid., p. 477.
  - (2) Ibid., p. 457.
  - (3) Ibid., p. 602.
  - (4) Ibid., p. 602.
  - (5) Ibid., p. 91.
  - (6) Faith and Life, p. 364.



This is biblical "perfectionism" and it means all that the word strictly connotes,<sup>1</sup> as over against the reluctant use of the term among advocates of certain holiness movements where perfection is professed only after the word itself is taken to mean something else.<sup>2</sup> The attainment of entire sanctification is not merely a possibility but a certainty since it is part of God's salvation.<sup>3</sup> To assume, however, that this has been achieved in this life "is so far from being the mark of the Christian's life that it would be the signature of his death."<sup>4</sup> The Scriptures promise that it will be attained "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23).<sup>5</sup> Even then, suggests Warfield, since we are not infinite but finite creatures growth and development will take place; but this will be a progression in perfection much as an apple which though not fully ripe could nevertheless be said to be perfect for its stage of development.<sup>6</sup> "But as the asymptote of the hyperbola ever approaches it but never attains, so we are eternally to approach this high and perfect standard."<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile in this life men are viatores but never consummatoes, ever running the race, fighting the fight, progressing but never completely having done with sin.<sup>8</sup> The holiness movements in both Ritschlian and Fundamentalist<sup>9</sup> circles had allowed the radical nature of sin and its corruption to drop out of consideration, Warfield contended, and as a result were betrayed into being satisfied with a vessel made to appear clean on the outside while inwardly remaining corrupt. They

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- (1) Perfectionism, vol. II, p. 219.  
 (2) Ibid., vol. I, p. 100.  
 (3) Ibid., vol. II, pp. 83, 517-519; Biblical Doctrines, p. 467.  
 (4) Perfectionism, vol. II, p. 105.  
 (5) Faith and Life, p. 370.  
 (6) Perfectionism, vol. II, pp. 453, 552; Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, pp. 143, 160.  
 (7) Faith and Life, p. 447.  
 (8) Perfectionism, vol. I, p. 218; Ibid., vol. II, pp. 88, 444, 518; Faith and Life, p. 371.  
 (9) Our terminology here, not Warfield's.

were not content to know that a Christian's life is hid with Christ in God, and that the life thus hidden is manifested only in glory.<sup>1</sup> Actually the constant recognition of our imperfection in this life should serve as a spur to greater effort<sup>2</sup> in such a manner that the attitude of the Christian becomes one of continuous dissatisfaction with self, and of an ever increasing satisfaction with Christ.<sup>3</sup> Thus struggle, not quietism, becomes the mark of the Christian's growth in sanctification.<sup>4</sup> He is ever the sinner, ever the saint;<sup>5</sup> never anything but wrath-deserving, yet always accepted for Christ's sake.<sup>6</sup> And in this life the more saint-like he actually becomes, the less saint-like he feels.<sup>7</sup>

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- (1) Perfectionism, vol. II, pp. 554, 575; Faith and Life, pp. 357-358.
  - (2) Perfectionism, vol. I, pp. 146, 151.
  - (3) Ibid., pp. 90, 100, 104, 105, 151.
  - (4) Ibid., vol. II, p. 606.
  - (5) Ibid., vol. I, p. 130.
  - (6) Ibid., pp. 113, 114.
  - (7) Ibid., vol. II, p. 454.

## ORGANIC AND COSMIC ASPECTS OF REDEMPTION

Just as men are not taken out of this world immediately upon becoming Christians but are left in it in order for sanctification to take place (Jn. 17:15, 17, 19),<sup>1</sup> so also the Church has her "inter-adventual period," her "day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2), "which means not merely the day in which salvation is freely offered to men, but also, in the light of a passage like I Cor. 15:25f., the day during which the saving work is perfected in men and in the world."<sup>2</sup> In the case of an individual, his perfected body is given him only "at the resurrection, at the last day, which is the second coming of Christ."<sup>3</sup> His sanctification which is the result of a gradual process "will be completed only in a crisis, a cataclysmic moment," when the Spirit of God produces in him the fitness to live with God.<sup>4</sup> After the same manner, the salvation of the world -- we might say, of the Church since they will one day coalesce<sup>5</sup> -- is a process; "and the end of this process for the one as for the other is to be reached only at the Parousia."<sup>6</sup> The salvation of the individual is not thought of atomistically, but rather in relation to the greater organism, the human race, for which Christ Jesus has made the propitiation.<sup>7</sup> The improvement of society takes the same pattern as that of the individual, however. In looking forward to the "Christianization" of the world Warfield wrote,

"There is only one way to get that; and that way is, to use the old phrase, the conversion of the world." "The law of God is clear, and He has made it the law of social advance: first the spiritual and only then the temporal. We must seek first the kingdom of God, if we would have these other things added to us."<sup>8</sup>

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(1) Faith and Life, p. 133.

(2) Perfectionism, vol. I, p. 243; Faith and Life, p. 215.

(3) Faith and Life, p. 370.

(4) Ibid., p. 371.

(5) The Plan of Salvation, p. 104.

(6) Perfectionism, vol. I, p. 244.

(7) The Plan of Salvation, p. 100.

(8) "The Princeton Theological Review," XIV, p. 507.

The trouble with much economic theory and pacifist scheming, thought Warfield, was that it did not reckon with sin. Sin itself must be eradicated before we can expect the effects of sin to be done away. The individual and social aspects of redemption do not exhaust all that is included in the term "Saviour of the world" as applied to Jesus, for

"even the lower creation, by virtue of the relation in which it stands to man, partakes in his redemption. If the very ground was cursed for man's sake that the place of his abode might sympathetically partake in his punishment, no less shall it share in his restoration ... The whole creation groans and travails together with him. But it shares also in the hope of the coming deliverance. For there shall be a new heaven, we are told, and a new earth."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield cited this organic and cosmic aspect of the redemptive process in argument against the criticism often made of the Reformed conception of life, that with its doctrine of predestination it leaves the earthly life without significance.<sup>2</sup> It seems, however, that the growth of the Church is conceived by Warfield to be almost strictly of a teleological nature. He repeatedly emphasizes the fact that "in the reformation of the world after the plan of God and its gradual transmutation into His Kingdom in which His will shall be done even as in heaven," the mode of God's action is that of process.<sup>3</sup> Warfield then defines the nature of this "process" by employing such analogies as that of the human body and its growth,<sup>4</sup> and the growth of the human race on the earth.<sup>5</sup> The result is that the Church is thought of in terms of our mortal body rather than in terms of Christ's resurrected body.

There are, however, a few passages in Warfield's works which bring to light notions which in a certain sense serve to mitigate this deficiency. The Christian's

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(1) The Saviour of the World, pp. 49-50.

(2) "The Princeton Theological Review," vol. I, p. 141.

(3) Ibid., p. 140.

(4) Perfectionism, vol. I, p. 280.

(5) The Saviour of the World, p. 97.



life is hid with Christ in God: his citizenship is in heaven and he has the life appropriate thereto to live. It is not a life which is immediately visible to the world, but which must wait until the parousia for its manifestation.<sup>1</sup> After a similar manner the Church also has her life hid with Christ. Her headship and unity are both invisible to the world and are to be manifested only at the second coming.<sup>2</sup> There might be added to these two notions the more general emphasis placed upon the nature of Christianity as essentially an other-world religion.<sup>3</sup> We are saved in hope (Rm. 8:24, 25), and "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13) who is "the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:14). There remains the "day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30) when "the delivery of the goods" already "purchased" (Eph. 1:14) will take place.<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding this line of thought, it appears that the hope of the Church is thought of under the category of teleology almost to the exclusion of eschatology. As a result, Warfield is not able to do justice to the Biblical teaching concerning the second coming. He not only refused to ascribe to the New Testament writers, Paul included, an expectation of the coming of the Lord as immediately impending, but went on to affirm, for example, that Paul

"teaches with great fervor and consistency a doctrine of a prolonged period of development under the government of the exalted Jesus, through which the world advances to a glorious consummation."<sup>5</sup>

In reviewing the past development of the Church through history Warfield comments,

"No one knows how many more thousands of years the secular process must continue before the great goal is attained and the great promise fulfilled that the whole shall be leavened."<sup>6</sup>

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- (1) Faith and Life, pp. 350-360; The Power of God unto Salvation, p. 203.
  - (2) "The Princeton Theological Review," vol. XVII, p. 316.
  - (3) Counterfeit Miracles, p. 177.
  - (4) Faith and Life, p. 293.
  - (5) Perfectionism, vol. I, p. 244.
  - (6) The Saviour of the World, p. 91.

It seems to us that if the New Testament teaching can be summed up in a phrase it would be in the words of Jesus, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matt. 24:42; cf. vs. 44). The mistake of the evil servant was precisely that he said in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming" (vs. 48). If this be true then there exists no ground for affirming either that the parousia is to take place in the near future or that it will not take place in the near future. We must not lose sight of the imperative "Watch." The march of the Church through time must be thought of as constantly under the judgment of the parousia.

It is difficult to draw out much further into detail a doctrine of the Church from Warfield's writings due to the lack of material on the subject. There are some discussions of the doctrine of baptism but the argument in these runs along the tradition lines of mode and subject.<sup>1</sup> Over against a Roman Catholic conception of the Church Warfield taught that,

"men are not constituted members of Christ through the Church, but members of the Church through Christ; they are not made the members of Christ by baptism which the Church gives, but by faith, the gift of God; and baptism is the Church's recognition of this inner fact."<sup>2</sup>

Infant children of believers are to be baptized on the basis of the promise of God's grace to such in the first instigation of the covenant with Abraham. The covenant has never been narrowed down by Scripture to exclude the children of believers, hence they are still entitled to baptism, which stands in a similar place in the New Dispensation to circumcision in the Old.<sup>3</sup>

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(1) Studies in Theology, pp. 345-408.

(2) Ibid., p. 422.

(3) Ibid., pp. 390, 408.

Undergirding this teaching is a conception of the continuity of Israel and the Church. The Church, historically speaking, is really one, "founded on one covenant (which the law could not set aside) from Abraham to today."<sup>1</sup> This covenant was one of grace received by faith, a faith in which not the assentive, but the personal fiducial element was from the beginning its chief characteristic.<sup>2</sup> Since this faith is not the cause but the means of salvation, baptism, the ordinance given to all those who belong to Christ, is administered on presumption rather than infallible knowledge of union with Christ.<sup>3</sup> If the attempt is made to be as exclusive as possible in the conception of the Church, admitting only those whom we are forced to recognize as united with Christ, then we have what Warfield termed as, "broadly speaking, the Puritan idea of the Church." If on the other hand the attempt is made to be as inclusive as possible, baptizing all who, in the judgment of charity, may fairly be recognized as children of Christ, the result is the general Protestant doctrine of the Church.<sup>4</sup> Since no one can read the heart, only the second of these two principles can, in reality, be carried out.

The Church is the pillar and the ground of the truth. It exists not for itself — that is, for the beauty of its organization, the symmetry of its parts, the majesty of its services; it exists for the truth which has been committed to it.<sup>5</sup> Matters of church government and forms of worship are not thereby rendered of no significance, however. To view them as such would be as irrational and un-Biblical as insisting that it makes no difference how a typewriter is put together "because, forsooth, the typewriter does not exist for itself, but for the manuscript which is produced by or rather through it."<sup>6</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 408.

(2) Biblical Doctrines, p. 471.

(3) Studies in Theology, pp. 389-390.

(4) Ibid., p. 389.

(5) Faith and Life, p. 378.

(6) Ibid., p. 377.

It would doubtless be unfair to expect from Warfield a discussion of the doctrine of the Church in any way comparable to the richness with which it is now being treated as a result of the ecumenical movement. Certainly Warfield was not very ecumenical as far as any effort to effect church unions between Protestant bodies is concerned, but this was most likely due to his notion of the spiritual unity of the Church rather than any special ecclesiastical exclusiveness in his own mind. In this connection he wrote:

"The Reformation is the substitution of spiritual unity under the headship of Christ for external, mechanical unity under the papal monarchy;" "substitute Christ for the Pope as the Head of the Church, and spiritual for corporal unity, and you have at once the explanation of our Protestant divisions, and the antidote to much of the alarm which they cause in the unreflecting minds."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield threw out organic church unity as a goal possessing any intrinsic value.

"We are justified, then, in seeking the unity which all desire, not along the lines of organic unity ... but wherever the presence of its one Lord is realized. Where two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is in the midst; and it is impossible for any one, unless blinded with prejudice,<sup>2</sup> to deny that it is the presence of the Christ that makes the Church."<sup>2</sup>

He even opposed organic union in some instances because he believed the union to result in a lowering of the testimony to Christ and His Word.

"A show of organized strength in the face of the world is everywhere being made to take the place of the only real strength, which comes out of loyalty to Christ and His Word. Everywhere men are busy building a big house over a divided family and reck nothing of that divided heart which can prosper in nothing."<sup>3</sup>

Throughout his life Warfield gave evidence of his concern for the Biblical and theological work produced by men of other church communions, a fact which should not be overlooked in appraising his doctrine of the Church. With his

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(1) The words are those of John Dall in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. by Hastings, vol. X, p. 247, quoted with especial approval, by Warfield in "The Princeton Theological Review," vol. XVII, p. 316.

(2) W.W. Holdsworth, The Christ of the Gospels, p. 249, quoted approvingly by Warfield, Critical Reviews, p. 287.

(3) Critical Reviews, p. 287.

(3) Ibid., p. 287.



command of modern language — French, German, Dutch, and Greek — he kept abreast of the thought of the Church in the most ecumenical sense. His reviews of the various works which came before him do not display a cool, impassive style one would expect in the case of material holding merely an intellectual interest. When reviewing secular works or even works in the field of religion, though written by men obviously not in the Church, his style is quite different.<sup>1</sup> This would seem to indicate that he gave full recognition to these various communions, and the men who spoke for them, as members of the Church universal. We do not think our argument here to be unnaturally deduced, especially in the light of the role Warfield accorded the Church at large as the subject of theological knowledge.

Though he denied the faith of the Christian community to be the source of dogmatics, rather than the Scriptures —, it is in the light of the Bible that we are to continually reform our doctrines<sup>2</sup> —, he did affirm that "it is the people of God at large who are really the subject of that knowledge of God which systematic theology seeks to set forth."<sup>3</sup> No one individual should think that the knowledge of God as He has revealed Himself is perfectly mirrored in his human consciousness, since there is no man that is not a sinner.<sup>4</sup> Even the people of God at large are not to think that collectively they can nullify the effect of sin. Only the pure in heart can see God; and none are in this life really pure in heart.

"Meanwhile God is framing the knowledge of Himself in the hearts of His people; and, as each one of them seeks to give expression in the forms best adapted to human consciousness, to the knowledge of God he has received, a better and fuller reflection of the revealed God is

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(1) E.g. John McTaggart's reasoned plea for atheism, Some Dogmas of Religion, reviewed in Critical Reviews, pp. 146-154.

(2) Studies in Theology, p. 103.

(3) Ibid., p. 105.

(4) Ibid., p. 104.

continually growing up."<sup>1</sup>

Just as an individual Christian experiences a corresponding growth in the intellectual and ethical development of the soul,<sup>2</sup> so also theology, as the task of the Church, is a progressive science to be completed only in the minds and hearts of the perfected saints. At the end, being at last like God, they shall see Him as He is. He shall be known by them in all the fullness of His revelation of Himself; that is, in their mind shall lie theology as the perfected ectypal science. The broken reflection which all too often here below is a deflection, will then be without flaw.<sup>3</sup> "Now we know in part; but when that which is perfect is come that which is in part shall be done away."<sup>4</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 105.

(2) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, p. 143; Faith and Life, p. 447.

(3) "The Princeton Theological Review," I, p. 146.

(4) Studies in Theology, p. 105.

## SUMMARY AND EVALUATION.

In endeavoring to assess the value of Professor Warfield's work as a whole, it must be kept in mind that an unusually large proportion of his writings were of a controversial nature. This is easily understood; for working in the period in which he did (1878-1921), he conceived of his task as, in many respects, a negative one, a clearing of the ground, as it were, upon which some man of the future was to build. His primary foe was naturalism in all of its expressions;<sup>1</sup> and accordingly the nineteenth century immanent theology, in which theology had become the "science of religion" and the "modern mind" existed as the measure of all things, became the object of the brunt of his attacks. These polemic writings suffer, however, from that weakness which all controversial literature in a measure must bear, namely, that of being "geared" to the times.

It is unfortunate too, that the main body of Warfield's writings appeared in the form of articles scattered widely throughout many different periodicals. After his death, the most important of these were collected and published in a set of ten volumes; but just a glance at the complete collection of the Professor's works as they lie on the shelf in the library at Princeton Theological Seminary will show that these ten volumes comprise barely half of the material which never appeared in 8vo form.

The dominant, and by far the most admirable, characteristic which shines through the whole of the Princetonian's work is its strong Biblical emphasis. As a student, his post-graduate study was done in the field of New Testament literature, and the first offer of a teaching post which came to him was

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(1) Biblical and Theological Studies, ed. by S.C. Craig, p. xxvii.

in reference to a chair of Old Testament literature. The first teaching post which he actually accepted was one of New Testament exegesis. Though most of his life was spent as Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, there flowed from his pen throughout this period a number of distinctly Biblical and exegetical studies. His view of the inspiration of the Bible is doubtless to be seen as an important factor in sustaining this effort, and the volume Revelation and Inspiration,<sup>1</sup> in which his thought on this subject is set down in a definitive form, is probably at present the most widely circulated of all his extant works.

Warfield saw in his day three trends in theological thought which seemed to him most alarming: (1) a cutting loose from all external authority which meant, under whatever name it may be called, a retreat from the Word of God to the word of man; (2) a drift away from definitiveness in theology; and (3) an obliteration of doctrines distinctive of Christianity, in particular the doctrine of the person of Christ.<sup>2</sup> He saw a direct relation between the first of these -- he has in mind the inspiration of the Bible -- and the other two.

"Such doctrines as those of the Trinity in Unity, of the Deity of Christ, of His work of Expiation, of the Supernatural Redemption -- such doctrines, specifically as Christian theology -- rest on Scripture alone; are drawn out of Scripture, or are not drawn out of it at all. And in saying this we have unveiled the seriousness of the drift into indefiniteness, consequent on the renunciation of the authority of the Bible."<sup>3</sup>

From his schema Warfield could foresee nothing bright in the immediate future for Christ's kingdom and yet the eventual triumph of it was a matter of faith

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(1) Republished in 1948, under the title The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible. Several short articles and a fine biographical sketch of Dr. Warfield were replaced (unfortunately we think) by a lengthy introduction by Cornelius Van Til.

(2) "The Homiletic Review," March, 1898, p. 203.

(3) Ibid., p. 205.



with him, so he wrote, giving expression to an almost blind faith in the working of God's Spirit, "I fall back gladly on the assurance that God will not permit His truth to perish out of the earth." "Men may come and men may go, but these are things that abide forever."<sup>1</sup>

The thirty years since the death of Warfield have seen marked changes in theological thought, not the least of which has been a considerable correction of the trends which so alarmed Warfield. Today we are being called back to the Word of God; a renewed interest is being shown in dogmatics as the task of the Church; and Christology is being accorded more sympathy than at any time since the Reformation. All of this has taken place, however, without returning to Warfield's theory of verbal inspiration. In the words quoted above, then, Warfield has proven to be more of a prophet than perhaps he realized, for who would gainsay that in these past thirty years we have seen a great movement of the Spirit of God.

If Warfield was mistaken in the functional value which he placed upon the verbal inspiration of the Bible, the theology which he based upon the Bible has lived to see a substantial revival. The "Biblical realism" of Otto Piper, now in vogue at Princeton, certainly bears out the heart of Warfield's teaching on sin and grace; though at the same time it repudiates his doctrine of the knowledge of God, including of course, the theory of verbal inspiration. Many loci communes can be seen also between Warfield's teaching of Christology and soteriology and that which we have come to think of as the Theology of the Word. This is to be explained, of course, by their common adherence to the Pauline-Augustinian-Calvinistic doctrines.

At the time of Warfield's death in February, 1921, Karl Barth had already

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(1) Ibid., p. 208.

begun to criticize the optimistic anthropology of the liberals; but in Great Britain, and to even a greater extent in the United States, -- probably due to the fact of their victory in the war and of not seeing at first hand the horrors of war -- theologians were slower to realize the truth of his insights. The committee engaged in the publication of Warfield's articles were over ten years in completing the task, during which time the English speaking world was becoming acquainted with the works of Barth. The similarity between the two was immediately apparent, especially with respect to their criticism of the Ritschlian theology, and was the subject of comment. The publication of Warfield's massive work, Perfectionism (two volumes), became the occasion of the following editorial remark in "The Expository Times":

"No doubt Dr. Warfield and the Barthians show a common adherence to the Pauline-Evangelical theology of sin and grace ..." "Dr. Warfield's general objection to the Ritschlian theology is that it is subjective or naturalistic. That is why it lays all the stress on the Christian life." Both Warfield and Barth "recall us to the theocentric standpoint of the Protestant Reformation. They would remind us that theology is not theistic philosophy. In Christianity it is God who speaks and man who listens, and the function of Christian theology is to hear and expound God's authentic Word, not to set forth man's thoughts about God." "It is a religious or theocentric rather than a philosophical or anthropocentric emphasis. That is why the name of a traditional Calvinist like Dr. Warfield may be associated with those of Neo-Calvinists like Karl Barth and Brunner."<sup>1</sup>

The period in which Warfield labored was certainly a time of lean years for evangelical Christianity. Outside of the Bible Conference and Summer Camp Meetings it had but vanished from the scene. Warfield and the Princeton school were, in the northern part of the United States, about its only scholarly defenders and doubtless rendered inestimable service in preventing it from falling into further disrepute. In Christology, while Warfield was

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(1) Vol. XLIII (April 1932), pp.291-292.

perhaps too prone to take over uncritically the thought forms themselves in which the early Christological controversies were carried on, the heart of his emphasis cannot be denied. Furthermore, the orthodox Christology is not to be found at some half-way point between docetism and ebionitism where Christ is a man and in some sense also God, or God and in some sense also a man; but in the scandalon of Chalcedon in which alone justice is done to the New Testament picture of Christ by proclaiming Him to be all that man is and at the same time all that God is. In soteriology Warfield allowed an element of rationalism, inherited from the Hodges, to remain unpurged in his thought; though here, too, the essence of his teaching is truly Biblical, viz., that in salvation it is not a question of man reaching up to God but of God reaching strong hands down to man. From the standpoint of a great deal of Reformed thought today, Warfield's desire for definitiveness was allowed to go too far, especially in the doctrine of predestination, with the result being a teaching which is not predestination in any eschatological sense, but a philosophical notion of rational causation.<sup>1</sup> Against all the various movements of perfectionism in American Fundamentalism, Warfield's dynamic conception of salvation came as a much-needed corrective. He did not materialize salvation, that is to say, it was not for him "something" to "accept", but was rather the mighty action of God in which, in accord with His eternal election, He was saving men.

There is considerable relevance in much of the writings of Warfield for the present day. Especially is this true of his Biblical and theological studies, the best of which have been republished in three successive volumes.<sup>2</sup>

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(1) Cf. T.F. Torrance's review of The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, "The Scottish Journal of Theology," vol.7, no.1, p. 106.

(2) The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, 1948; The Person and Work of Christ, 1950; and Biblical and Theological Studies, 1952.

The late Mr. Samuel G. Craig, under whose editorship the works were republished, informed us<sup>1</sup> that the demand for Warfield's books today is considerably greater than at the time of their first appearance.<sup>2</sup> The reviews which have appeared in various theological journals are also, to quite a marked degree, more sympathetic now, he stated. It may not be out of order to mention at this juncture our experience in the many secondhand book stores of Edinburgh and Glasgow. It is quite interesting to note that many books from the pens of more liberal authors are to be seen on the shelves gathering dust, many of the very same books against which Warfield argued so strongly and, at the time, to apparently such little avail. Warfield's works, on the other hand, are impossible to buy; and though the dealers are all acquainted with his name, they say his books rarely come into their hands and when they do they are sold quite readily. Though he was a man of his time and to a certain extent did not remain untouched by the nineteenth century optimism, especially in his eschatology, —he had very little to say concerning the second coming of Christ—the present demand for his works is a testimony to his ability to rise above his time by bringing his theology, to the best of his ability, into conformity with the teaching of Scripture. If we were to single out from among his books several which seem especially noteworthy we would mention, in addition to the works newly published, two volumes, The Lord of Glory and Faith and Life. Both are composed entirely of exegetical material, though written in essay style; the former pertaining to Christology and the latter to soteriology and the Christian life. They are by no means what we would term "popular" in nature, but perhaps more than one Christian today, being thoroughly disgusted

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(1) In a private interview at Princeton, December, 1953.

(2) Cf. Biblical and Theological Studies, ed. by S. G. Craig, p. iii.



with pulpit oratory, niceties of expression and emotionalism, could read these works with real satisfaction finding in them Biblical exegesis of the highest order and written from a heart of unmistakable conviction and concern.

The general theological position of Warfield is still taught in the United States and his works used as textbooks at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the North; at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, on the West Coast; and in the South by Professor Wm. Childs Robinson of Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia. Professor Robinson looks to Warfield in matters of Biblical theology and exegesis, and yet retains a much more friendly attitude to the Baselian theology than do Professors Cornelius Van Til and John Murray of Westminster or Carl F. H. Henry and Edward Carnell of Fuller.

We have endeavored to be as objective as possible in our presentation and as fair as possible in our criticism of Professor Warfield's thought; - we are quite sure we have not measured up to his greatness - but since the very act of criticism entails the possession of some standard of judgment, it is extremely difficult, if not humanly impossible, to keep that standard from coloring our perception of the very facts to be judged. It is for this reason that we have frankly admitted our own theological bias from the outset thus alerting the reader to any possible subjectivity which we have not been able to overcome. The study has proven a most profitable one. We feel that we have grown both intellectually and spiritually as a result of it.

Perhaps no more fitting words could be found to serve as an epilogue to this study in Christology and soteriology than those spoken by Warfield during his final class lecture at Princeton, delivered less than twelve

hours before his death:

"The laying down of His life in our stead was a great thing, but the wonder of the text (I John 3:16) is that He being all that He was, the Lord of glory, laid down His life for us, being what we were, mere creatures of His hand, guilty sinners deserving His wrath."<sup>1</sup>

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(1) Quoted by Wm. C. Robinson, Our Lord, p. 149.

## APPENDIX

## THE FORM OF GOD

In rendering μορφή as he does, Warfield is in agreement with Lightfoot and Gifford, both of whom treat the word as though it still retained its Aristotelian meaning. Lightfoot argued that the strict Aristotelian usage is found in Philo and that the word must have retained some of its technical sense in popular speech. "Words stamped in the mint of the philosopher pass into general currency, losing their sharpness of outline meanwhile, but in the main retaining their impress and value" (St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, p. 130). The word in the New Testament still indicates that which when changed means a change in the inner life, rather than in the mere outward shape, cf. Rm. 8:29; Phil. 3:10; II Cor. 3:18; Rm. 12:2; Gal. 4:9. It, for Lightfoot, denotes all the divine attributes. It is not to be equated with φύσις or οὐσία but involves participation in them.

E. H. Gifford set σχῆμα and μορφή in contrast with each other, the former referring to the changeable figure, shape, or fashion of a thing while the latter denotes "properly the nature or essence, not in the abstract, but actually itself subsisting in the individual, and retaining as long as the individual itself exists." Thus, in the passage [Phil. 2:5-11], "'form of God' is the divine nature actually and inseparably subsisting in the Person of Christ" (The Incarnation, p. 30). It includes the whole nature and essence of deity and does not include anything "accidental" separable such as the mode of manifestation. The Son of God could not possibly empty Himself, then, of the 'form of God' without thereby ceasing to be God.

Advocates of the Kenosis theory such as A. B. Bruce and Charles Gore who held the 'form of God' to be the indirect object of the verb ἐκένωσεν could accept no such definition for μορφή as the above. There were others, H. C. G. Moule for instance, who maintained that Christ in emptying Himself of the 'form of God' simply left behind His glory and the manifestation commensurate with deity (Philippian Studies, p. 93). Meyer in the Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians understands μορφή as "an appropriate concrete expression for the divine δόξα as the glory visible at the throne of God..." (Handbook, p. 88). Accordingly he says that the Logos emptied Himself of the divine 'form'.

Yet another position is held by Vincent who in the International Critical Commentary wrote, "Μορφή here means that expression of being which is identified with the essential nature and character of God, and which reveals it" (p. 57). Though attaching this meaning to the 'form of God', Vincent still maintains, with the Kenoticists, that it is to be considered the indirect object of the verb ἐκένωσεν. He delivers himself from the dilemma, however, by assigning a different meaning to the verb. Michael is in general agreement with Vincent as to the meaning of μορφή for he says that, though the philosophic background of the word is of little significance, it "always signifies a form which truly and fully expresses the being which underlies it" (The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, the Moffatt series, p. 86).

From the Moulton and Milligan work The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament we learn that by New Testament times μορφή had lost its accurate



metaphysical content which it possessed in Aristotle and Plato, and in the year 160 A.D. it is found combined with the more outward σχῆμα. In Epictetus IV 5.19. it is practically equivalent to σχῆμα (p. 417). Philip Schaff appears to have about this same understanding of the 'form of God' when he identifies it as that which is involved in Christ's divine glory of the pre-existent state explained in the sense of John 17:4 (Christ and Christianity, p. 117).

From this brief sketch of the lexicography contemporaneous to Warfield, a definite pattern is clear. Those who attach an Aristotelian meaning to the word μορφή do not allow it to be the indirect object of ἐκένωσεν (Vincent is an exception here). On the other hand, those who say that Christ emptied Himself of the 'form of God' proceed to define μορφή in terms of those attributes which they will allow that Christ laid aside in the incarnation. Among this group there are Kenoticists who include under the 'form of God' the possession of such attributes as omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence; while those who oppose the Kenosis theory generally identify it with the pre-existent glory mentioned in John 17:5.

John Calvin is to be placed in this last named group. "The 'form of God'," he said, "means here his majesty...his equipage and magnificance, shewing him to be a king—his scepter, his crown, his mantle, his attendants, his judgment throne and other emblems of royalty..." "Christ, then, before the creation of the world, was in the form of God, because from the beginning he had his glory with the Father, as he says in John 17:5" (Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, p. 55). Behm, in Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Band IV,

substantiates Warfield in that no such thing as a metamorphosis from God to man is to be allowed nor can an exchange of proper μορφή (eigentlichen) be found in the thought of Paul. Μορφή Θεοῦ is not the equivalent of εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ. Balm, however, sees the word μορφή more in the light of its LXX usage than its Aristotelian sense as had Warfield. The 'form of God' is thought of as His vestment (Gewand) since in the LXX the word carries the idea of exterior manifestation (Aussenseite), (p. 756).

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(1) See preface for explanatory note.

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